Understanding the role and meaning of food for older

people through participant-driven photo-elicitation.

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Submitted as partial fulfilment of a Doctorate of Philosophy at Bournemouth

University June 2022

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Abstract

Background

Food is a universally shared need regardless of age, gender, or heritage. It is an everyday occupation and there is value in exploring aspects of daily life that may seem mundane or 'hidden'. Uncovering the unnoticed is something that has been of interest to many different fields of study including occupational science which is drawn upon in this research. Occupation, here, meaning the things people want and need to do to lead fulfilling lives of meaning and purpose. Food occupations can be any activities connected to food, from purchasing or growing to cooking and eating.

The global population is ageing, people are living longer, and financial stability, physical ability and social connections are identified by older people as important for positive active ageing. Food is an occupation that can be connected to any or all of these areas. Research into older people's experiences of food has often focused on nutritional needs, life course events or age-related health changes impacting on food occupations. There is more limited research about independent, active, older people and what role food plays in their day to day lives and what meaning it holds for them.

Aim

The aim of this research was to develop an understanding of the role and meaning of food for older people living independently in their own homes. Participant-driven photo-elicitation was used to provide new insights into this less investigated topic.

Methods and methodology

This is a qualitative study founded in hermeneutic phenomenology. People's experiences of their food occupations are individual, and these experiences can be interpreted in different ways with knowledge constructed from this process. Ten participants (six male, four female) aged 67 – 86 years old were given digital cameras and asked to take photographs of their food and any associated items and activities.

The images were used to carry out unstructured interviews. Participants led the process, deciding what photographs to take and which images to discuss. Principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis as thematic analysis were then used to uncover individual and shared themes.

Findings

Three main themes emerged: Identity, Belonging and Environments. Findings highlighted the individuality of each person's interaction with food. Identities being reflected in people's choice of foods and roles within the home. Findings from previous studies were echoed but also new perspectives emerged. Previous research has predominantly viewed older people's food roles through gendered discourse identifying women as the main provider with men having minimal involvement. In this research shared roles between older couples were discussed with a less binary male and female divide. A sense of belonging and social connection was generated through past and present food experiences reflecting the temporal aspects of belonging. Consideration of environments enabled exploration of how the natural world may influence people's food occupations as well as food providing an opportunity to connect with the outdoors.

Conclusions and implications

This research has demonstrated that the role and meaning of food for older people can be complex and very individual. Some older people may not be particularly interested in food however others may want to continue to manage all aspects of their food occupations. This could include making discerning judgements about the quality of items, going to different shops for different foods, eating in different places and making active, intentioned decisions about what to eat. To achieve this, the accessibility of the built and natural environment is important to minimise physical and societal barriers to an active, autonomous life in relation to food. It is also essential for people to understand the importance of food at an individual level. Taking the time to really know what food means to someone can show that their food values have been heard, respected, and responded to. Understanding the role and meaning that food holds for older people is essential to ensure active engaged lives are maintained.

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Preface

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Introduction

This research sought to understand the role and meaning of food for independent older people by using the research method of participant-driven photo-elicitation. The introduction to the thesis provides an overview of the work carried out for this study. This includes briefly considering the origins of the research, the current context in which it is situated and why this is an important area for exploration. Methodology will be outlined, and a short summary of findings provided. The subsequent chapters of the thesis will then be detailed to provide a guide to the work. The word 'food' is used in this thesis to refer to both liquids as well as solid food items and the term 'food occupations' refers to all the different activities people may carry out in relation to food; from planning, preparing, purchasing, and consuming.

1.2   Overview of the study

The original interest in older people's experience of food was generated when working as an Occupational Therapist (OT) in Adult Social Care, supporting people who could no longer manage their own food occupations. Reflecting on what this change might mean for someone led to considering how people may have experienced food before they needed support. This initiated an exploration of related topics and over time developed into a research proposal for the current study.

An overarching topic that was an important part of the research context was the fact that globally, there is an aging population (United Nations [UN] 2015). These demographic changes have generated a global drive towards healthy and active ageing (Rechel et al. 2013). Governments and organisations have been exploring ways to enable older people to have control over their own health, maintain independence and to be active in older age. This, in turn, could reduce the need for support for people in older age from Government-funded support systems (Rechel et al. 2013). Developing a deeper understanding of the role and meaning of food for older people could add to the discourse surrounding positive, active ageing.

Before pursuing this topic as an area of research, it was important to consider what was already known about the role and meaning of food in older people's lives, as this may have been something that had already been extensively researched and documented. Reviewing the literature highlighted that the nutritional aspects of food for older people was a more common focus. Literature that considered more qualitative aspects of food in older people's lives predominantly concentrated on exploring food as experienced in supported living environments (care homes or nursing homes for example). Research exploring the food experiences of older people living independently in the community was sparse. Research exploring the everyday food experiences of independent older people was sparser and where it did exist it often focused on a specific aspect of ageing such as changes to people's lives from illness, disability, or loss. There was very little literature exploring the everyday lives of older people and food as research into common, daily life activities highlighting a gap in the literature that this research would address.

People's interaction with food and drink is ubiquitous, something that everyone needs and is part of everyday life regardless of age, gender, or heritage. Given that eating and drinking can be such a regular part of daily life, it can get taken for granted and become an almost unconscious act amongst all the other daily tasks. Regular, embedded routines of daily life may only be noticed when they become difficult to achieve. Researching every day occurrences can lead to a deeper understanding of how people live their lives (Back 2015). However, this can be challenging because the topics are commonplace and perhaps seen as something not worth talking about. Therefore, consideration needed to be given as to how to make daily practices seem unusual to illuminate their meaning and develop new understandings, this required consideration of different research methodologies (Back 2015).

1.3   Methodology

The focus on striving to understand an individual's subjective, socially constructed experiences of food, required an underpinning philosophy that would enable this knowledge to be developed. A subjective ontological position was adopted, and this

was central to subsequent decisions influencing and guiding the structure of the research. In keeping with this ontological perspective, a methodology consistent with a hermeneutic philosophy was used.

Consideration was given to different qualitative research methods and the selected method of data generation and collection was participant-driven photo-elicitation and unstructured interviews. This offered the potential to uncover everyday food practices in a collaborative research process between researcher and participant. By empowering the participant to be in control of what images they took and what images they chose to talk about, this can create a more equal partnership in the research process. Another reason for using participant-driven photo-elicitation was that using photographs can enable the everyday, less referred to items, to be captured in an image and then recalled and discussed during the interview. The combination of empowering the participants and the potential for uncovering embedded food practices were the reasons for using this form of data gathering for the research.

Ten participants were recruited for the study, aged 67 – 86 years old, four women and six men. They lived in a mix of urban, semi-rural and rural locations and were all independent with food related tasks. Ethics approval to conduct the study was granted through Bournemouth University (16686) and participants had detailed information about the study prior to taking part. All participant names used in this work are pseudonyms.

Participant interviews were analysed using the principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al. 2012) with reference to Van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation (Van Manen 1990). IPA can be viewed as a methodology however within this study it was used as a data analysis method, a form of thematic analysis that gave a specific structure to follow and adapt (Smith et al. 2012). Transcripts were analysed inductively, and three major themes were developed: Identity, Belonging and Environment.

1.4   Main findings

The research findings reflected the complex ways in which food is part of people's lives, their identities, and varied roles. People's food choices, control of food and food preferences were specific to each individual and reflected different facets of people's identities.   Participants views on the importance of food in their lives varied significantly, ranging from people who were interested in every aspect of food (e.g., provenance, purchasing, preparing, eating, exploring new food) to people who would be very happy to hand over nearly all food related responsibilities to someone else. Participants had had many years to develop their values and beliefs in relation to food and this was reflected in the interviews.

The theme of Environment encompassed both the built and natural environments as well as economic environments. Consideration was given to both where to eat indoors but also to eating outdoors and feeling part of the natural environment. Whilst participants did not discuss their finances specifically, the economic environment was nevertheless important in enabling people to buy the foods they desired as well as selecting different shops from which to buy the food. Additionally, the research also highlighted the importance of the environment to people's enjoyment of and engagement with different food situations.

The findings from the current research supported previous literature but also raised questions as to whether it is now time to reconsider the images of more traditional gendered food roles, whether they are still current and whether there should be a more gender-neutral approach to foods. Food could provide a sense of belonging both with family members and in different social groups. Some participants' experiences of travelling or living in other cultures added to their identities connected to food, not just in terms of the influence of their choice of foods but also what it meant to them and their sense of belonging in previous experiences. The past experiences of different food cultures were maintained in current food practices and there was a sense of nostalgia in food experiences that were shared in the interviews.

1.5   Layout of the thesis

The structure of the thesis will begin with an in-depth Background (Chapter Two) to the current research. The chapter provides a context to the research by reviewing the different debates about how to define 'older age' and consideration of the social and physical environments in which older people carry out their food occupations including acquiring, eating, and sharing foods. To further contextualise the research and the areas in which the findings may support service development, the government agendas relating to personalisation within Social Care are discussed. The drive to provide an individualised service is very relevant to this research when considering how individual someone's food occupations may be, therefore it is beneficial to outline the nature of the personalisation agenda.

Following the Background Chapter will be the Literature Review (Chapter Three). This will detail the structured approach that was followed to find previous research carried out exploring the role and meaning of food for older people. The search of the literature identified 25 articles which addressed aspects of the research question. This included literature published between 1996 – 2016. Whilst later literature has since been identified, this timescale represents the evidence available when the literature search was undertaken in January 2017. Any significant evidence that has since been published is considered in the Discussion Chapter (chapter six). The review of the literature identified a gap for a study exploring everyday food practices as the lived daily experience of older people, not considering any particular need or life change. There appeared to be minimal use of photo-elicitation to explore the food experiences of older people therefore this added a more novel approach to understand this topic.

The Methodology Chapter (Chapter Four) will provide further insight into hermeneutic phenomenology and the reason that this is the underpinning philosophy for this research. More information will also be given regarding the process of individual interviews, participant-driven photo-elicitation and reflexivity.

The Findings Chapter (Chapter Five) explores the themes derived from the data. The subthemes have been collated into three major themes of Identity, Belonging and Environment and the chapter is structured around these themes. Quotes from participants are used to illustrate the interpretations made about the role and meaning of food for participants. The findings emphasise that older people's experiences of food are complex, reflecting identities, past experiences and continued enjoyment or dislike of food related work and the food itself.

The Discussion Chapter (Chapter Six) places the findings within the context of current research, policy and related literature in order form a comprehensive discussion which allows the contribution that this research makes to the body of knowledge to be clarified. The small number of participants and qualitative nature of the research has enabled depth of understanding to be gained which is a strength of the study design.

The final chapter, the Conclusion (Chapter Eight) summarises the research and considers strengths, limitations, and recommendations both for practice as well as for further research.

Chapter 2   Background

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will introduce this study's origins, which lie in personal experiences as an occupational therapist (OT) working in Adult Social Care and the experiences of the service users in relation to food. There has been research exploring different elements of people's food occupations considering disability, illness or significant life changes resulting in the need for care and nutritional support. However, there is very little research considering the experiences of older people who are independent. This study was therefore designed to fill this gap. This research focused on older independent people, however, the background to this study began when working in Social Care and therefore considering the current service provision provides context into which findings from the study may be applicable.

2.2   Experiences leading to development of the research

The initial interest in wanting to understand what food may mean for older people and what role it plays in their lives was generated when working as an OT in an Adult Social Care Team in the UK. This role involved, amongst other things, assessing people's daily occupations, the things they needed and wanted to do to live a fulfilling life. Difficulties with food shopping, meal preparation, accessing a kitchen, or just holding cutlery to be able to eat a meal, were all things that could be identified as an occupational challenge by the clients visited in their homes.

When working as a community OT, there were times where clients' difficulties accessing food was particularly challenging. This could be due to their medical diagnosis impacting on motoric eating or reduced mobility and sensory loss making it much more difficult to prepare the food that they had always cooked. Coming from a family where food was an important and enjoyed part of the day, seeing clients struggle with this gave pause for thought and reflection.

One case was significant in generating more formed thoughts about the topic of food and older people as a focus for further study. A client, who had always had an allotment and had grown organic vegetables to cook for vegan meals, became rapidly reliant on paid carers for all shopping and meal preparation due to a fast-paced degenerative condition. Whilst carers visited regularly and were attentive to the person's needs, they did not have the time to provide anything more than a microwave meal as sustenance. The provision of pre-packaged meals which took minutes to heat in a microwave was so far removed from the individual's food values that they consequently refused to eat. This had a significant impact not only on their physical health but also on their psychological wellbeing. They started refusing to meet with professionals and the relationship with carers became very challenging. What the person wanted was organic vegan food prepared and cooked at home under their direction, but this was unobtainable within the service provision. At a time when the person had lost control over so much of their life, having been a very independent individual, the only way to take control was to refuse to eat the food. The outcome was that a family friend stepped in and cooked vegan meals that were frozen and then heated on the hob.

This situation raised questions about why more priority could not be given to mealtimes where it had such an essential role in the person's life, not just for their physical health but for the psychological and social wellbeing. The person knew what they wanted and what they valued as a meal and felt that the food they ate was incredibly important for their body. This had been a strong value held prior to being diagnosed with a degenerative condition, it was even more keenly felt following diagnosis and when NHS and Social Care staff became heavily involved in the person's support. None of the staff were wilfully withholding access to the sorts of foods that the person wanted, provision was given, at the time, within what was available.

There were however contrasting scenarios, where people expressed relief that they no longer had to think about food other than to heat something in the microwave or oven. Their interest in food was more functional and so long as they had something, they did not mind what it was or how somebody cooked it. For some people, food

played other roles. The animated delight of someone in their mid-90s discussing their trip to a local supermarket café for a single hot sausage as a treat. This was a treasured outing where the individual was collected by minibus and taken to the supermarket each week. Funded privately by the individual but highly valued as an opportunity to socialise both with fellow supermarket visitors as well as the café workers who knew the person well. There was a strong sense of belonging in this person's descriptions of this important weekly event. Whilst the sausage was a keen focus, there were so many other things being gained in this experience. Food was a means to an end, a reason for leaving the house, and a means to socialising and maintaining an established role within that community of café workers and other people on the bus.

What was evident in these different situations, was that people have different ways in which they interact with food, what it means to them and what role it played in their life, and it was important to understand this when planning and providing support with food occupations. However, the limited options for how this support could be provided resulted in food provision being more as fuel. These experiences in Adult Social Care led to questions about what role food had played in people's lives and what meaning food held for them before they became known to statutory services. Asking questions at the point when someone needed support felt as if it became unintentionally very functional, what could people do or what did they find difficult. Questions were focused on ensuring people would manage to have something to eat for nutrition and fuel rather than trying to match it to their personal preferences. Gaining a deeper understanding of the role and meaning of food for independent older people's lives could raise previously unconsidered aspects of food that could support developments in the provision of services for people when they are no longer able to be independent.

2.3 Older People

2.3.1 The Ageing population

The population of older people is increasing in nearly every country across the globe (UN 2015). The number of older people aged over 60 (the United Nations definition of

an 'older person') in the world, between 2015 and 2030 is expected to grow by 56 per cent and to more than double by 2050 reaching 2.1 billion people over 60 years old (UN 2015). The number of people aged over 80 years old is projected to triple between 2015 and 2050 (UN 2015). Therefore, this is an important group of the population to understand, to know what is important for them and how to ensure a positive transition into older age.

This research is exploring the role and meaning of food for people who are aged 65 years or older. At the time this study was undertaken the age at which people could retire in the UK was 65 years old (Department for Work and Pensions [DWP] 2017) and often statutory services for older people within the UK have criterion that they are serving people aged 65 years and older. However, there are challenges to the definition of older age as starting at 65 years old.

Life expectancy has increased in most countries around the globe and people age at different biological rates, someone in their 60s now may be considered middle aged however in the 1800s they would have been considered old (Sanderson and Scherbov 2008). The World Health Organisation (WHO) also recognises that someone's biological age can show that someone considered 'old' by chronological years could be much younger in terms of their biological age and vice versa (WHO 2015). For example, if someone has smoked heavily from a young age this can have a detrimental impact on their body and therefore their biological age may indicate that they are older than their actual age due to the deterioration from smoking. For this current research, it would not have been feasible however to have calculated everyone's biological age. A different approach to calculating old age was suggested by Sanderson and Scherbov (2008). They suggested taking a prospective view of people's ages using life expectancy calculations to consider how long someone may have left to live. They do however acknowledge that this is a population-based way of looking at ageing and does not consider individual factors. This was also not an appropriate way to denote 'older age' for this research.

Whilst debates about what constitutes 'older age' will continue as life expectancy increases it was necessary to have some age parameters for the research. Measuring biological age was not realistic nor was calculating age based on life expectancy. At the time of the research being undertaken 65 years old was the age of retirement and the point at which the UK Government indicated that people have reached older age (DWP 2017). Therefore, it was decided that this research would seek to recruit people aged 65 years and older. Additionally, retirement can be a time of change and could potentially generate alterations to the role of food which could provide further reflection on the meaning of food in people's lives.

2.3.2   The Experience of Ageing

There has been a significant move towards facilitating active ageing for older people as part of promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing or reducing ill health in later years (Rechel et al. 2013). The drive to maintain a healthy older population is underpinned by economic considerations of potential pressures on health and social care systems as population age increases (Rechel et al. 2013). Research exploring people's experiences of positive ageing have highlighted a variety of areas that they feel are important to support successful healthy and active ageing (Carr and Weir 2017).

Areas seen as important, in addition to staying healthy, include carrying out meaningful activities, being socially engaged, adapting to change, and having a positive outlook (Bryant et al. 2001; Bowling 2006; Carr and Weir 2017). In Carr and Weir's (2017) study exploring successful ageing they highlight how people's views of what constituted being active and engaged with life can mean different things. People in their 70s talked of volunteering and contributing to the local community to stay active whereas people in their later 80s and into their 90s may consider independently managing day to day tasks (shopping, gardening etc) as a way to keep active (Carr and Weir 2017). The benefits of being active and having something meaningful to do has also been reflected in an earlier study by Bryant et al. (2001) where participants spoke about how important being busy was for their wellbeing.

The WHO developed an Active Ageing Framework in 2002 and included six areas of importance to facilitate, from economic considerations, health promotion and the physical environment (Swift et al. 2017). Autonomy, independence, and quality of life were essential aspects across all domains (Swift et al. 2017). More recently the WHO developed this work further with the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030 (WHO 2021). A global strategy aimed at collaboratively working towards ensuring lives of dignity for older people with four areas of focus: Age-friendly Environments, Combatting Ageism, Integrated Care and Long-Term Care (WHO 2021). In Stenner et al.'s (2010) study exploring how older people view active ageing and what it meant to them, it was shown to be a complex range of different things for different people, from being physically able to still mobilise, through to being able to pursue hobbies and socialise, therefore keeping physically, socially and cognitively active. Being able to assert control and choice over daily activities was important for people in the study and Stenner et al. (2010) highlighted that;

> "…it is important to recognize the multitude of ordinary activities (gardening, gossiping, preparing meals etc.) that contribute to the quality of everyday life" (Stenner et al. 2010, p. 476).

Researching the everyday role of food and exploring what meaning it has for older people living independently could add to the current discourse about active ageing and quality of later life.

Another aspect of ageing that provides further context for this research, is that of societal views of ageing and the challenge of stereotypes and ageism. If successful ageing is seen as being able to be actively engaged with life, doing the things that someone needs and wants to be able to do, then society needs to ensure that this is possible. However, stereotypical views of older people as passive with declining physical and cognitive functioning can become a barrier to people being able to actively participate in life as they wish (Swift et al. 2017). Stereotypes of ageing can be learnt at a young age and internalised, developing a perception of ageing as a time of loss and declining ability. This can have a somewhat self-fulfilling prophecy and has been seen to have measurable negative effects on people's health and wellbeing

where they hold these perceptions of older age and then move into older age themselves (Swift et al. 2017). Studies exploring perceptions of older people have discussed findings such as describing older people as "…high on warmth and low on competence…" (Cuddy et al. 2005, p.267). Views that could reduce opportunities for older people to have access to and actively engage in the world around them due to being viewed as unable to learn new skills and not being productive and useful members of society (Cuddy et al. 2005) could add further barriers to participation.

This current research is not aiming to specifically challenge ageism, or the stereotypes associated with ageing. However, by exploring the food occupations of older people who are independent in their daily lives, there is the potential to add to a different discourse around ageing. Reflecting older people who are active, competent members of society managing their own food needs rather than passive and reliant on the state. As well as considering societal barriers that older people may face when trying to live their lives as they want to and in an engaged and active way, there can also be barriers that specifically impact older people's physical access to food and local communities, this will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.3   Barriers and Enablers to Accessing Food

Another way that active and healthy ageing can be addressed is through the environments in which older people live. As recognised by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST), increasing accessibility of the built environment can increase independence and autonomy, important components of successful ageing (POST 2017). The WHO (2007) provided a guide to Age Friendly Cities which considers a range of environmental factors such as housing, transport, and outdoor spaces (e.g., provision of park benches for resting) being considered with recommendations for how they could be designed to meet the needs of an ageing population to promote independence and active participation. Organisations such as the UK Urban Ageing Consortium (Handler 2014a) in collaboration with the Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA) and the University of Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing have produced guidance on considering how to approach the design of urban spaces. This is not just to address the needs of an ageing population

from a health perspective but from an active citizenship, collaborative perspective. Handler (2014b) developed a research and evaluation framework for age friendly cities. The work highlights key points relating to older people and their local environments such as:

> "Around half of those aged 65+ face problems getting outdoors (largely due to environmental barriers)" (Handler 2014b. p. 48).

Thinking about this from the more individual viewpoint and referring to Stenner et al.'s (2010) observation that everyday activities should not be overlooked when considering important factors in older people's quality of life. Focusing on food specifically, the different occupations relating to food can include procurement. Therefore, being able to access shops to get food can be an important part of an older person's life and something that can be impacted upon by the design of the environment. Challenges such as lack of places to rest, reduced access to public toilets and poorly maintained walking areas creating trip hazards (Handler 2014b) are all ways that the environment can impact on someone's ability to get out and get on with what they need or want to do. Whilst the evaluation framework by Handler (2014b) and the UK Urban Ageing Consortium (Handler 2014a) Alternative Age Friendly Handbook cover a range of environmental barriers and enablers in relation to older people's access to the environment, there is less specific reference to food shopping directly or indeed any other ways in which an older person may acquire food (e.g., access to spaces for growing food).

Research by the University of Hertfordshire (Wills et al. 2016b) considered ways that supermarkets can play a part in supporting older people to access food thus maintaining their wellbeing through promoting independence and autonomy. They produced recommendations such as having volunteers who could go round supermarket stores with the older person to help them, increasing staff training about working with older people and thinking about the shopping environment to make it accessible and useable by older people for example providing extra seating. There were several recommendations addressing the social and environmental aspects that

can become a challenge for older shoppers and consequently can impact on their ability to purchase food and eat the foods they want.

The design of different projects to support people to maintain independence relating to food was also the focus for the Independence Matters Programme instigated by the Design Council (2012). They recognised that older people need to have autonomy and choice to maintain wellbeing. This was not about environmental adaptation or environmental design, it was about service design. The programme was developed to inspire different organisations to create new services that would challenge ageism creatively. They had seven successful projects three of which focused specifically on food; Casserole, a food sharing network; League of Meals, a skill sharing opportunity for older adults to share their knowledge and skills about home cooking and Meet2Eat, a service providing education relating to different aspects of cooking and food. The projects aimed to learn from older people, respecting their knowledge and skills but also providing education for those who had not previously had experience in the kitchen. Food sharing networks promote social opportunities which, as has already been established, are essential for older people who want to relate to others (Design Council 2012).

Food occupations permeate all aspects of life regardless of age yet there are potential barriers impacting older people specifically when accessing their local environments and therefore, by extension, potentially barriers to accessing food. Societal barriers in the form of stereotypes and ageism as well as physical environmental barriers could all combine to make the acquisition of food more challenging in older age. Therefore, researching the role that food plays in the lives of older independent people who are living in their own homes and potentially engaged in their communities, could add to considerations of accessibility.

2.4   Occupational science and the everyday lives of older people

Having considered some of the drivers behind the need to better understand the lives of older people, the importance of research into everyday occupations will now be

considered. Researching what people 'do' in their lives, their occupations, is an area of study that has emerged predominantly within the sociological, ethnographic, and philosophical fields (Moran 2006; Scott 2009; Back 2015; Ebrey 2016) but is also an important focus for occupational science which provides a theoretical underpinning to occupational therapy practice.

Considering first the sociological and philosophical perspectives of studying 'the everyday', a proponent of this perspective was Henri Lefebvre, a French Sociologist and Philosopher who published the first volume of his seminal work The Critique of Everyday Life in 1947 (Elden 2004). He theorised that it was important to examine what happens in people's everyday lives as they can contain both mundane and monotonous experiences as well as the exceptional and surprising (Elden 2004). Erving Goffman, another sociologist, published his work Presentation of Self in Everyday Life in 1959 and directed people to attend to the things that others would see as unimportant (Back 2015). Lefebvre was critiquing everyday life from a political perspective (Elden 2004) and sociologists and philosophers have tried to understand what everyday existence means for people in different cultures, societies, and geographical locations. Everyday experiences are ephemeral, hard to grasp, to pin-down and articulate (Ebrey 2016) yet a source of deep interest and seen as a way to try to understand people, who they are and what they do. People use their everyday experiences to make sense of their worlds, creating meaning out of these experiences (Misztal 2016). From a sociological perspective, examining the minutiae of everyday life uncovers what underpins the 'bigger picture', the constant pattern of existence. People getting on with all the small things that need to be done (Moran 2006; Scott 2009; Back 2015; Ebrey 2016; Misztal 2016), and without people carrying on every day, society would not function (Scott 2009).

Sociologists and philosophers may, in part, use the exploration of people's everyday lives as a way to understand how groups of people and population's function and perform. Occupational scientists examine individuals' experiences of everyday activities, or 'occupations', to gain a deeper understanding of how people use occupations to feel fulfilled in their lives. Occupational science has been described as;

> "Simply put, occupational science is the formal study of the things people do; making a cup of tea, singing in a choir, working the night shift…individuals engage in occupations in unique ways… [the] occupational perspective complements the viewpoint of disciplines concerned with biological, psychological, ethical, spiritual, historical, economic and political aspects of human existence ….it is concerned with…the reasons people do things…experience of doing them…how …occupations relate to wellbeing…" (Hocking and Wright-St. Clair 2011 p. 29-30)

Occupational science emerged in the early 1980s (Hocking and Wright-St. Clair 2011) as a group of occupational therapy academics explored further the occupational nature of being human. Focusing on people as 'occupational beings' who have an innate need to participate in occupations to live lives of meaning and fulfilment (Christiansen and Townsend 2010). Yerxa (1989) postulated that there is much to explore in the interplay between how people engage with occupations throughout their lives and how they manage these occupations in a wide range of environments. It has been highlighted that there are blurred boundaries between the different areas of occupational science, sociology, anthropology, and aspects of psychology. All the different disciplines reflect elements of occupational study however occupational science has humans as 'occupational beings' firmly at the centre of its research focus. Hasselkus, in her 2006 Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture (Clarke Slagle was an early proponent of Occupational Therapy in America in the early 1900s) focused on the importance for occupational therapists to pay attention to the everyday practices of the people they worked with, to not lose sight of this in the day-to-day clinical practice of referring to patients' assessments and interventions by homogenous headings such as 'Activities of Daily Living'. She urged occupational therapists to remember how important all the small details of individual's occupations are, emphasising the importance of this for people with and without disabilities.

> "…the small experiences of everyday life and everyday occupation have complexity, beauty, meaningfulness, and relevance to both health and well-being that belie their aura of ordinariness and routine." (Hasselkus 2006 p. 630)

This encouragement for occupational therapists to remember to take a detailed occupational focus in their work, to pay attention to the 'everyday' as experienced by

each individual, echoes the ambition of this research. Hasselkus (2006) talks about everyday occupations as "seen but unnoticed" (Hasselkus 2006 p. 627), the aim with this research is to make the role and meaning of food for older people 'seen *and* noticed'. Examining something that can be seen as so common, so every day and routine for people, can offer an opportunity to make the mundane 'exceptional and surprising' (Elden 2004). Occupational science can illuminate humans as occupational beings, viewing their daily occupations worthy of attention and of deeper examination to understand people's experiences of how occupations relate to their experiences of doing, being, belonging and becoming (Wilcock 1999).

Occupations can be described as both being driven by biological need as well as having cultural meanings (Hocking 2000). It could be proposed that food encompasses both and Hocking (2000) goes on to suggest that;

> "…symbolically meaningful occupation is a distinguishing feature of humans, perhaps originating in primitive rituals…the potential for occupations to generate new meanings at a personal level may be a fruitful focus for occupational science researchers." (Hocking 2000 pg. 60)

Occupational scientists are interested in discovering how people's participation in the daily occupations that they need and want to do can impact on wellbeing (Hocking 2000). The origins of this study (as already outlined earlier in this chapter) lay in work as an occupational therapist, providing interventions when people were experiencing illness and disability, when they were no longer able to carry out their daily occupations as they had done previously. Occupational science underpins this work by considering the importance of occupations to people's wellbeing, not specifically from a medical model perspective but viewing humans as occupational beings (Hocking and Wright-St. Clair 2011). In this instance the focus being the occupations associated with food including eating and drinking, procuring, preparing, cooking and all associated food occupations. Understanding this could support the development of interventions by occupational therapists.

Occupations can be described as productive or leisure focused and food can be either or both (Hammell 2004). Food is essential for survival but can also be used as a means of creativity, expression and fulfilment. Studying the 'phenomenon of ageing' from an occupational science perspective, Wright-St Clair et al. (2011) developed an understanding of the everyday lives of older people by exploring how they engaged with their daily occupations. These are the occupations people needed and wanted to do each day that 'rooted' them in their lives (Wright-St Clair et al. 2011). Wright-St Clair et al.'s (2011) work was framed by the phenomenological philosophies of Heidegger and Gadamer and their interpretations concluded that studying older people's engagement with daily occupations revealed just how much these daily, ordinary tasks matter by holding life in place, providing familiarity, comfort and routine (Wright-St Clair et al. 2011). Whilst food was not a specific focus of their study it was present within the research findings as part of people's discussion of their daily routines. Food was part of life's 'comings and goings' and for some people it gave a sense of purpose. However, exploring 'the everyday' with the participants could also raise discussions about how, finding themselves no longer able to carry out a routine task, they would become more aware that their body had changed through ageing making these tasks more challenging (Wright-St Clair et al. 2011). Hocking (2000) proposed that;

> "…maintaining a coherent sense of self and having a sense of control over events have appeared in guidelines for successful and presumably healthy ageing…" (Hocking 2000 p. 64)

This reflects the intersection between considerations relating to active and healthy ageing and the importance for people to maintain their identities through control over their occupations. Food can be part of people's lives in many ways therefore this is rich territory for exploring in-depth individual older people's experiences of occupations relating to food and what meaning and role it plays in their lives.

Whilst this research is exploring a small number of individual experiences, the study of everyday activities through an occupational science lens can also have an influence at a

societal level (Hasselkus 2006). In this research it is proposed that examining the everyday lives of older people could uncover new or deeper understandings which, from an occupational science perspective, could generate knowledge about individual experiences of food occupations. Contributing to the current body of work in this area and, potentially raising new considerations for services supporting people with food when they are not able to manage things themselves.

Food is something experienced by everyone and is a fundamental part of everyday life therefore it is naturally intertwined with people's everyday lived experiences. Considering the role and meaning it has for people in older age focuses the study on experiences at a particular time of life, when the everyday may no longer include the routines of work and roles may have altered and the timings of days changed.

Studying things that happen every day can be challenging as they are seen by individuals as just how things happen, just what they do and not something they would particularly think to tell someone about (Moran 2006; Scott 2009; Back 2015; Ebrey 2016). To understand the phenomena of food, as experienced by the older people required novel ways to elicit these insights and reflections. The rituals, routines and patterns of an individual's life is what forms their subjective world, it provides stability, comfort in their known world and their social connections (Scott 2009; Back 2015).

2.5   Food support in older age

The context of how society addresses food provision for older people needing support will now be considered. This may be a potential context into which findings could be applicable. If, as has been proposed by Wright-St Clair et al. (2011), that everyday practices are what provide older people with a sense of self, purpose, meaning and rootedness, then how is 'the everyday' maintained or created for people needing support with food.

First it is important to clarify the difference between the Health Provision (in terms of services and interventions from the NHS) and Social Care (in terms of services and

provision from Local Authority). The National framework for NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care (2016) defines a 'health need' and a 'social care need' as;

Table 1 Definitions of Health Need and Social Need

The National framework for NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care (2016)
2.1 Whilst there is not a legal definition of a healthcare need (in the context of NHS continuing healthcare), in general terms it can be said that such a need is one related to the treatment, control or prevention of a disease, illness, injury or disability, and the care or aftercare of a person with these needs (whether or not the tasks involved have to be carried out by a health professional).
2.2 In general terms (not a legal definition) it can be said that a social care need is one that is focused on providing assistance with activities of daily living, maintaining independence, social interaction, enabling the individual to play a fuller part in society, protecting them in vulnerable situations, helping them to manage complex relationships and (in some circumstances) accessing a care home or other supported accommodation.
2.3 Social care needs are directly related to the type of welfare services that LAs have a duty or power to provide. These include, but are not limited to: social work services; advice; support; practical assistance in the home; assistance with equipment and home adaptations; visiting and sitting services; provision of meals; facilities for occupational, social, cultural and recreational activities outside the home; assistance to take advantage of educational facilities; and assistance in finding accommodation (e.g. a care home)

From these definitions it is evident that, from statutory service provision, it falls to social care to provide support with food related tasks at home rather than the NHS when it is assessed as a social need as opposed to a medical need. Interventions relating to food that would be provided from healthcare would be, for example, where someone may need support of a dietician due to a nutrition-related illness. Outside of the statutory provision there are also third sector (charity and private) organisations who may support older people with food.

Food could be seen to be separated into health needs and social needs, echoing the division of Government funded services. When considering meal support for older

people living in the community, meals on wheels has been a traditional way to support those unable to access food independently or safely (Watkinson-Powell et al. 2014). However, for adult social care, there is a projected funding gap of £6bn in 2020/21, rising to £13bn by 2030/31 (Roberts et al. 2015) therefore local authorities have had to focus service provision on those with the highest level of need resulting in services associated with prevention and supporting people to remain at home independently being significantly impacted (Mortimer and Green 2015). Home Care has been one of the resources most affected by financial cuts, with 15 per cent fewer older people receiving local authority home care. Yet, the number of older people in the community has increased simultaneously (Mortimer and Green 2015).

There appears to be a shifting focus towards people in the community volunteering to help and support each other, community citizenship, to support people who may have previously received funded care for things such as shopping and cooking (Mortimer and Green 2015). However, this seems to be happening without a clear discussion with the communities about the changing expectations (Humphries et al. 2016). It is important for people to not only be in a community but to feel that they can play a valued part in their community however this means that they also need support to continue being able to support the people around them (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services [ADASS] 2017).

There are examples of community food provision for older people, but these vary across the country. The Public Health England (PHE) review into practical ways to support older people to have a healthy diet considered eight different projects and schemes set up across the country to address needs relating to nutrition (PHE 2017). Whilst this has a physical health focus, other benefits of the scheme were apparent.

One example, The Casserole Club (PHE 2017) in Staffordshire, was a community project which brought together people volunteering to cook an extra portion of dinner for an older person in need of a meal. The project review highlighted some practical challenges and discussed how friendships were made, giving a sense of social connectedness, reducing isolation, and improving wellbeing. It was felt that the service

provided more choice to people, and whilst the numbers in the study were comparatively small, the results were encouraging enough that the project was to be continued (PHE 2017). Local projects such as this are taking on services that may once have been seen as the domain of social care, taking a preventative approach to reduce health decline whilst also having a person-centred approach to food provision. However, they are individual small services, and there is no guarantee that an older person would live in an area where they could access something like this.

Considering again statutory service provision, in Watkinson-Powell et al.'s (2014) study, researchers interviewed Home Carers about their food provision experience for older people living in the community. Whilst this was a small study, within the Home Carers' interviews, there was a predominance of ready-meals being provided as time did not allow them to cook food from raw ingredients; this was seen as an 'unattainable aspiration'. There was an assumption that the service user liked the food or just had to adjust. Families were increasingly relied upon to do food shopping, potentially impacting the older person's role and identity. Research showed how concerns of being a burden were frequent for older people, so they would not necessarily ask for what they wanted (Gustafsson et al. 2003; Martin et al. 2005; Watkinson-Powell et al. 2014). Some home carers tried their best to provide person-centred care but struggled with time constraints and available food (Watkinson-Powell et al. 2014). Within this example there does not seem much scope for an individual's previous daily engagement with food to be maintained or replicated in some way, raising again thoughts as to how this may impact on a person's sense of wellbeing. The person feels somewhat lost amidst the need to provide fuel within a short space of time.

This image of food provision being driven by a more functional approach is at odds with the phrase 'person-centred practice' which is used frequently within Social Care services in the UK. Person-centred practice, or client-centred therapy, was first fully recognised and named by Carl Rogers, an American Humanistic Psychologist who proposed that therapy should involve mutual regard, listening, partnership and interventions specific to the difficulties raised by each client (Gross 2015). From health

promotion in the early 1980s when the World Health Organisation talked about shifting the focus to people managing their own health needs and being empowered to do so (Sumsion 2006), person-centred practice has become a central tenet within health, social care and third sector organisations working with people of all ages and needs.

Person-centred practice is a fundamental part of legislation and guidance underpinning provision of social services within the UK. Documents such as; the White Paper Our Health, Our Care, Our Say (Department of Health [DoH] 2006), together with the earlier Green Paper Independence, Well-being and Choice (DoH 2005), High Quality Care for All; NHS Next Stage Review (DoH 2008) where one of the themes was choice and personal control with a focus on a personal responsibility for staying healthy. In 2011 there was Shared decision-making: "Nothing about me without me" (Coulter and Collins 2011) with a focus on involving patients in their care and treatment to improve their health outcomes. The Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equalities Act (2010) are also important legislation considering the rights of the individual and the drive for a person centred approach. The benefits for NHS and Social Care from personalisation have been broadly considered to be user satisfaction, motivation, quality of life and increased self-efficacy; enabling people to be able to take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing (Adams and Drake 2006).

One of the most current influential Acts however is the Care Act 2014. This brought about significant changes to the way in which people's needs were assessed and had as a central theme that any care provision should start by understanding what an individual's needs are and what their personal goals are (Care Act 2014). It also considered that it was important for health and social care workers to take opportunities, when working with individuals, to think about whether care needs could be reduced, delayed, or prevented by earlier intervention. One of the many significant changes that came with the Care Act (2014) was building on the shift to supporting an increasing number of people into using Personal Budgets and Direct Payments (ADASS 2017) including older people.

A personal budget comprises of the total cost calculated for the care that someone has been assessed as needing. A personal budget may be fully funded by the local authority or, the total amount of the personal budget may encompass the local authority funding as well as the amount that a person is assessed as being able to contribute. A Direct Payment is where the person receives the local authority contribution directly so that they can employ their own care, or the money can remain with the local authority for them to manage someone's care. There are different ways in which personal budgets can be managed and agencies can be used to support someone with this situation if they are unable to do so themselves (O'Rourke 2016; West and Needham 2016; Brooks et al. 2017).

When first considering personal budgets, the idea sounds like a panacea to enabling people to choose how their care funding is spent, to personalise it and direct it, enabling autonomy and choice, core principles of a person-centred approach. A perfect way to enable someone to maintain or recreate their 'everyday' lives how it had been or how they had envisaged it being. However, whilst personal budgets have seen increasing uptake by younger disabled adults, the use of them by older people is significantly lower (West and Needham 2016). O'Rourke (2016) suggests, from his study of eight older people receiving personal budgets, that whilst the finance enabled individuals to continue to employ specific carers with whom they had built trusted working relationships, these relationships were developed prior to the funding being changed to personal budgets. The way in which the money was paid did not make the care more personalised, the carer and the person they were caring for were the ones who achieved this. Personal budgets for older people have been seen to have some challenges not least because people may not have the confidence to manage funding from social care or feel that they can spend it on certain things that would actually be beneficial (Brooks et al. 2017).

Considerations as to why personal budgets have not flourished amongst older age groups has reflected on the pressure within social care for workers to still manage constrained budgets (West and Needham 2016) alongside the reluctance for some

older people to take on managing their own funds even with the potential support systems available (West and Needham 2016; Brooks et al. 2017). West and Needham (2016) go on to suggest that whilst the attempt to make personalisation and therefore personal budgets something that is open to younger people through to the oldest old, it rather naively fails to recognize that there are differences in how the ages will potentially be attracted to and feel confident with using personal budgets. They suggest that if this is not given more consideration then there is a risk of something that has been seen to be an inclusive strategy, becoming ageist and exclusive (West and Needham 2016).

If personalized budgets are the potential route for people to have personalised support and care, then, based on current assessments of success of the system so far, it would suggest that this is not a very effective way to support older people to receive a very personalized and tailored service despite the worthy aspiration of policy makers. There has been recognition of the lower uptake and lower success of personalised budgets for older people which has led to initiatives such as 'Think Local Act Personal' (Think Local Act Personal [TLAP] 2011) which is a collaboration of over 50 different organisations working together to address issues such as making personalised budgets more successful.

Focusing on individual's needs and wants in relation to food as well as supporting people to use any potential funding to best effect could mean a more effective use and provision of support and care services. Developing a deeper understanding of the role and meaning of food for older people may provide a way to highlight the potential importance of food, draw it out from being an 'everyday' mundane practice and show it to be something worthy of more attention, to find out what someone really wants.

Whilst everyone has a physiological 'drive' for food, an individual's sociological and psychological needs relating to food are shaped by many different factors throughout their life (Germov and Williams 2013). There are fundamental aspects of a person's life that are interlaced with their experiences of food. People may well see food as fuel or as a means to an end, for example, seeing it as a way to socialise or to have the energy

to carry out an activity whilst for others it will be the end goal in itself, the enjoyment and pleasure of preparation and eating (Bisogni et al. 2002)

2.6   Summary

This chapter has outlined how the initial interest in this topic was generated. There was then consideration of the challenges of defining older age and what it means to be an older person in society today. Considering the benefits of looking at the occupations people do every day (in this research in relation to food) is an area of study recognised as important and worthy of deeper examination in several fields with a particular focus on occupational science in this study. This is within the context of how exploring everyday practices can reveal the meaning of the phenomena being examined and the role it can have in people's lives. Older people should be treated as individuals, with the things that are important to them being understood. By better understanding the details of everyday lives, this knowledge can be used to inform and influence wider society. It is proposed that exploring this area could add to existing bodies of work looking at health and social care food related provision for older people with specific reference to finding ways to improve personalisation, in turn, potentially positively impacting on motivation to engage with food. Food and eating are everyday practices yet are complex, individual, and very personal.

Chapter 3   Literature Review

This chapter will discuss the process undertaken to seek literature relevant to the topic of study, the ways in which it was reviewed for quality and relevance using recognised systems of critical appraisal and review. The articles that were remaining after this quality control process were then read and their findings themed to reveal commonalities and more unique outcomes from the studies. These themes were inductively developed and were grouped under the headings of Role of Food, Meaning of Food and Older People. These headings were directly from the research question which was beneficial to consider what was already known about the topic to reveal research gaps and areas less explored within this topic. Consideration is given to the literature considering occupational science, highlighting the importance of food as an everyday occupation and an area worthy of further in-depth occupation focused research.

3.1   Purpose of a literature review

The purpose of this literature review is to detail the processes undertaken in searching for, selecting, critiquing and synthesising relevant, quality research and any other literature that was relevant within the topic area proposed for the current study. It contextualises the research question and highlights where there are gaps or areas less well explored within this field of study (Holloway and Brown 2012; Aveyard et al. 2016). Holloway and Brown (2012) recommend an initial search to begin establishing some of the key work and then continuing to develop a more in-depth review. They do however suggest a compromise between a 'lighter touch' overview of key literature, as suggested by some research experts, versus an exhaustive review; they recommend discussing major work related to the field of study to clearly provide a picture of the current work and justify the proposed research (Holloway and Brown 2012). The reasoning for this balanced approach is to avoid developing bias before carrying out the research, gaining an understanding of the topic but without being influenced into developing specific views or angles that would inadvertently influence the researcher

when gathering data and the subsequent analysis of research findings (Holloway and Brown 2012).

3.2   Procedure for searching for relevant literature

In September 2016 an initial scoping review was carried out to answer the research question:
What does photo-elicitation reveal about the role and meaning of food for older people?

To carry out a literature search, search terms needed to be generated from the research question. There are different tools that can be used to identify search terms however some are more suited to searching for quantitative studies and others for qualitative studies. One tool that has been used for both quantitative studies and qualitative studies was reviewed for suitability. There are two different versions of the tool however the one for qualitative research uses the headings of Population, Issue, Context and Outcome (PICO) to break down the research question into specific search terms. This was initially considered for use however, there was not a specific 'issue' being investigated therefore further tools were reviewed to see if they were more applicable. Additionally, some studies have reviewed PICO as being more successful for quantitative research (Cooke et al. 2012) however Aveyard et al. (2016) does consider it to be a robust tool for qualitative study. It still however did not fully fit this research question.

Further qualitative focused search term tools were considered including Setting, Population, Intervention, Control and Evaluation (SPICE) (Cooke et al. 2012) however this too included 'Intervention' and 'Control' which were not aspects involved in this study. 'Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type' (SPIDER) framework (Cooke et al. 2012) was reviewed for use and has been considered a suitable alternative tool for qualitative studies (Cooke et al. 2012; Aveyard et al. 2016) Aveyard et al. (2016) identifies that this tool was successful particularly in more specific searches which was beneficial when the purpose of a search was not intended

to be exhaustive. This was consistent with the discussion in section 3.1 about the depth and breadth of literature searching at this stage of research. The search terms identified (see Table 2: Search Strategy) were then considered for synonyms and an initial search strategy was created.

Table 2   Search Strategy

SPIDER	Search Terms	Synonyms
Sample	Older people (65+)	elder* OR aged OR old* OR "old* people*" OR "old* adult*" OR geriatric* OR OAP OR "senior citizen*" OR senior* OR retire* OR frail OR "elderly people*"
Phenomenon of Interest	Role of food	"role of food*" OR "role of meal*" OR meaning of food* OR food role* OR meal role* OR meal experience* OR meal episode*
Design	Photo elicitation	photo elicitation* OR photo-elicitation* OR photograph* OR photo-voice* OR photovoice* OR "photo dialogue*" OR photo-dialogue*
Evaluation	Views, feelings, thoughts	The Evaluation and Research elements of SPIDER did not form part of the search terms but were considered when reviewing literature generated by the search. Not including them in the search terms is adapting the tool however it allowed for articles that may not specifically refer to aspects of Evaluation. Specifying the research type was something that was implemented through the exclusion criteria, therefore again this was not being ignored but implemented through reviewing the literature personally and not relying on the search system. Aveyard (2012) advises that finding a perfect tool that is an exact fit for a study is unlikely so finding the one that is the best fit and using it potentially in combination with other tools may be most effective. Therefore adapting tools is not an unexpected or unaccepted approach.
Research	Qualitative/Theory/ Systematic Reviews	
	Results: 1, 2 and 3 = 43	

These search terms were then used to search mySearch. mySearch is a federated search engine which searches over 80 databases which the Bournemouth University has access to through subscription or free access. However, the main reason for using mySearch is that, within the 80 databases searched, are some that are particularly relevant to the subject of the current study (Table 3: Specific databases of interest searched through mySearch) focusing on areas such as social studies, healthcare, psychology, arts, and sociology. All searches were recorded using a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (Prisma) (Moher et al. 2009) Flow Diagram (Appendix A).

Table 3   Specific databases of interest searched through mySearch

Databases covered by mySearch that are of relevance to this topic (searching was not limited to these databases but these are ones that were a motivation for using mySearch – for full list of databases see Appendix B)	
Medline Complete	Science Direct
CINAHL Complete	British Library EThOS
Academic Search Ultimate	Supplemental Index
APA PsychInfo	Networked Digital Library of Thesis and Dissertations
OpenDissertations	Education Source
Complementary Index	SwePUB
Directory of Open Access Journals	SocIndex with full text
Alexander Street	

Using all three sets of search terms together resulted in 43 articles being generated. Manually going through the results and removing duplicates resulted in 19 individual articles.

Exclusion and inclusion criteria were developed (Table 4). Consideration was given as to whether to exclude studies focusing on people in supported living situations (residential homes, nursing homes) however, it was felt that studies focusing on food

experiences in these situations held the potential for revealing insights because of the changes that people may reflect on between independent community living meals and meals in supported living. Therefore, this was not used as an exclusion criteria.

Applying the exclusion and inclusion criteria to these 19 articles meant that no articles remained. None of the articles found by the search were specifically about older people, role and meaning of food and photo elicitation. Reviewing these articles in full there were four that discussed photo elicitation as a method used within food research. However, if articles referring to children and people under 65 years old were excluded from these articles this would remove three of the four. The remaining article was not specifically about older people but did cover a range of ages including people over 65. This one article focused on using photo-elicitation to explore participants' experiences of food in hospital (Justesen et al. 2014) therefore again not meeting the inclusion criteria.

Table 4   Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria for Literature Search

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Studies including; Adults and older people **or only older people**	**Studies including**; Children, Adolescents or only adults under 65
Studies including; Food choice, food work (including shopping and cooking), food habits	**Studies including subjects or focus on**; Nutrition at a biochemical level, animals, orthodontics, agriculture
Studies including; Role, Meaning, Identity and Cultural significance of food	**Studies including**; a focus on health promotion or food safety / hygiene with older people
Studies including: use of photo-based research	**Studies including**; Food service or market analysis of food purchasing
Studies written in English	**Studies including**: use of photographs as teaching tools
	Research Literature whose methods were quantitative or mixed methods

Whilst this search result showed that there was a potential gap in using this research method to explore this area, it also gave very little literature to review and meant it was not possible to answer the original question or place this study within the current context. To see whether other search engines produced more articles with this search combination, an additional 14 data bases were searched however this did not add any additional literature (see Table 5).

Table 5   Additional Data Base Search

Databases searched independently	
AGEinfo	InterMid and InterNurse collections
Cochrane Library	InterNurse
Journals@Ovid	Health Professionals
OT Seeker	UK Vet
PEDro	Intered
REHABDATA	MAH Complete
Sage Journals	Intermid
Scopus	
Springerlink	

A new search was then carried out by separating the initial question into two separate areas of investigation to see if this elicited more literature by separating the proposed methods of research from the phenomenon of interest. Two separate questions were generated from the initial question which was; *What does photo-elicitation reveal about the role and meaning of food for older people?*

1. What is the role and meaning of food for older people?
2. What does photo-elicitation reveal about the role and meaning of food?

The inclusion and exclusion criteria used for the original search were then separated to reflect the two questions, no new criteria were formed. Reviewing the literature generated by the two separate searches did not uncover any literature specifically

looking at the use of photo-elicitation with older people in relation to food. Therefore, the second question, focusing on the use of photo-elicitation, was a question specifically relating to the methods being proposed for use in the research. This was therefore used to develop a better understanding of the methods of visual research to aid the development of reasoning for its use within this field and will thus be discussed in the Methods Chapter (Chapter Four). Literature generated by the first question was the focus of the following literature review.

What is the role and meaning of food for older people?

An updated search was carried out in January 2017 over the same range of data bases referred to for the original search (Tables 2 and 4 and Appendix B) using the terms already generated relating to older people and food. This resulted in:

Search terms Older People AND Role of Food = 4325
With duplicates removed by search engine and only articles in English = 2843 articles

These articles were then scanned through looking at title and abstract and articles excluded using the inclusion / exclusion criteria terms (Table 4). This left 57 articles to look at in more detail: 55 qualitative studies, 1 theoretical and 1 systematic review. Reading the full articles to review the quality of the studies required the use of a tool to aid the criticality of appraisal. Assessing the quality of qualitative research studies can be challenging due to the wide range of different qualitative methods that can be employed (Aveyard et al. 2016). However, whilst qualitative research can be innovative, creative, and diverse in methods and approaches, it still needs to be robust and academic (Aveyard et al. 2016). The use of the Qualitative Research Critical Appraisal Skills Programme tool (CASP) and the Systematic Review CASP tool to review the quality of 56 of the articles (CASP 2017). There was one theoretical study which necessitated a different tool to review quality. Fawcett's (2005) Criteria for Evaluation of Theory was used to assess the quality of this one article. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were also reviewed alongside the appraisal tools (Appendices C, D, E, examples of critical appraisal tools).

In total 32 articles were removed from consideration. These articles either did not meet CASP (2017) criteria or not meeting inclusion or exclusion criteria. Additionally, a small number of articles were reviewed where people were in supported living situations. As discussed earlier, these articles had not been excluded in case they provided additional evidence about the role and meaning of food for older people. However, when reviewing these articles, it became apparent that the focus was specific to the accommodation setting and food provision within this setting and therefore they were rejected. Two rejected articles are now discussed to provide examples for the reasoning for removal of articles.

Moss et al. (2007) Frail men's perspectives on food and eating. Whilst the study met the inclusion criteria and replicated findings in other articles to some degree, there was a lack of information about the methods used and the methodology underpinning the study which meant it was more difficult to know whether the research had been conducted rigorously. In addition to this the format of the article seemed confusing in that the findings were more of a combination of discussion and findings and the discussion section lacked depth of analysis and the implications for practice were hard to discern. The study did not give any considerations to limitations and strengths and ethical considerations and the position of the researcher in relation to the study were not considered clearly. This article was dismissed due to its lack of quality and rigour.

Delaney and McCarthy (2014) Saints, sinners and non-believers: the moral space of food. A qualitative exploration of beliefs and perspectives on healthy eating of Irish adults aged 50 – 70. This article scored well in terms of the Qualitative CASP (2017) tool criteria, the methods used for the study were soundly presented and the work logical to follow, providing an interesting and insightful study. However, despite the article meeting inclusion criteria of some participants being older adults, when the article was read in more detail the participants were aged 50 – 69 which was slightly different from the title. This was due to it being part of a wider study that was engaging participants aged 50 – 70. However, it was not possible to know how many of the participants were over 65. The difficulty in knowing these details meant that it was

difficult to use the article when specifically looking at the role and meaning of food for people over 65. Therefore, it was decided that this article would not be used for the literature review.

3.3   Reviewing the Literature

A narrative synthesis of the literature was carried out as opposed to a meta-analysis or meta-synthesis as the literature was more diverse, including qualitative research studies, a systematic review, and a theoretical article (Hewitt-Taylor 2017). In addition to this, reviewing qualitative literature for individual experiences would not be appropriate for a meta-analysis which is used more for quantitative literature reviews (Hewitt-Taylor 2017). It was necessary to draw upon literature that had varying focus' (e.g.: food choice, food work) as there was a paucity of research specifically focussing on the role and meaning of food for independent older people in the community, reinforcing the need for this as an area of research. It also meant that a more diverse range of literature was reviewed to develop themes. Including articles that discussed older people's experiences of food within different contexts both showed what areas have been researched as well as being able to highlight different aspects of food roles and meaning in light of different health needs. The literature that was selected for the final review focused on elements relating to the phenomena of food as a lived experience for older people as opposed to nutritional aspects of food and health related aspects.

Initially when reviewing the literature key aspects were recorded in an excel spreadsheet for each study detailing; aim of study, participants, methods, strengths, and limitations (Aveyard et al. 2016) so as to have an overview of the key features of each piece of literature. Inductive Thematic analysis was then used to identify the central recurring themes within the findings of the studies. Thematic analysis occurs inductively, going through the articles repeatedly to 'pull out' the main points, gradually developing themes across the studies (Popay et al. 2006; Aveyard et al. 2016) rather than having a fixed set of themes to fit the studies into. Given the more diverse range of research topics within the articles this generated nine themes with three subthemes. These themes were then reviewed to locate them into three overarching

themes which were based on the research question. This could suggest the theming had been carried out deductively to suit these headings however, this was not the case and the main themes encompassed the themes generated inductively (Popay et al. 2006). Theming had its challenges given the overlapping nature of some of the aspects discussed within the literature however the themes separated these different aspects to enable more in-depth exploration.

Table 6   Themes from Literature review

Main Theme	Subtheme	Subtheme
Role of Food	Identity	
	Gendered Roles	Skills and Knowledge
	Food as pleasure	Choice
		Social Act of Eating
	Food as fuel	
Meaning of Food	Symbolism	
	Rituals / Traditions / Culture	
	Routine	
Older people and food	Ageing	
	Adapting to Change	

3.4   Review of Literature

There are 25 articles included in this literature review, 23 qualitative studies, 1 systematic review and 1 theoretical paper. A table summarising the studies and their key features and be seen in Appendix C. The review of literature section will start with a critique of the literature followed by the discussion of themes. Reviewing the literature will establish an overview of current understanding of the role and meaning of food for older people.

3.4.1   Critique of the literature

The quality of all the articles, as stated in section 3.2, were reviewed using the CASP Qualitative Literature appraisal tool, the Systematic Review CASP Qualitative Literature

appraisal tool and Fawcett's (2005) Criteria for Evaluation of Theory. The articles all reviewed well against the criteria in these tools hence their continued inclusion in the study.

The aspect that was hardest to identify in a number of articles was the consideration of the researchers own bias and position within the study (O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Genoe et al. 2010; Kullberg et al. 2011; Atta-Konadu et al. 2011; Lane et al. 2013; Monturo and Strumpf 2014). Consideration of the influence that a researcher may have on participant responses is important in understanding any bias in the literature. Therefore, understanding the methods used in data collection and data analysis can help to show in other ways how bias or researcher influence could be lessened.

The other criteria that were sometimes less overtly discussed were any ethical issues. For example, Genoe et al. (2010) and Atta-Konadu et al. (2011) provide clear and detailed accounts of the recruitment process for their studies interviewing families and couples living with dementia about their mealtime experiences. Genoe et al.'s (2010) study was over the period of a year and Atta-Konadu et al. (2011) was over three years. Care is taken to ensure participants are cognitively able to understand the studies and consent to participate however, given the longitudinal nature of these studies, there could be cognitive changes over this time for the person with dementia, therefore considerations as to whether participants were able to continue to consent to take part as their conditions may have progressed and changed.

Another article where the participants could be deemed vulnerable was Monturo and Strumpf (2014) Food, Identity and Memory Among Ageing Veterans at the End of Life. The men in this study were experiencing a terminal diagnosis and considered appropriate for palliative care. They were invited to join the study through gatekeepers including a chief research nurse and an outpatient nurse practitioner as well as gaining informed consent from participants. There was also a short mental health assessment carried out, this was to gain information on cognitive data though this is not further explained in terms of why this was being collected. It is referred to after stating that informed consent was given so the inference is that cognition was

being checked to ensure participants had capacity to participate however this is not overtly stated. Approval for the study was granted from the institution and consent was gained so the article does provide some details of ethical considerations. (Monturo and Strumpf 2014)

The age of the articles varies from 1996 – 2016. Seventeen of the articles were published between 2010 – 2016, meaning they were between one to seven years old at the time of the literature search. The older articles in the study were reviewed for quality and for continued relevance and were all assessed as being valuable contributions to literature in this field. The article published in 1996 is notably older however it is a seminal text within the study of food choice decisions, both seeing citations in other articles reviewed here but also Scopus Citation metrics show that the articles is highly cited.

There are notably several authors appearing more than once as authors of articles in the review. One study took place across three countries; New Zealand, Thailand and America and generated four articles used within this study (Hocking et al. 2002; Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; Shordike and Pierce 2005; Wright-St Clair et al. 2013). There is an additional fifth article where the research took place in Canada and was written by some of the same authors (O'Sullivan et al. 2008). This study is not directly linked to the other studies but is exploring the same themes. The decision to include all the articles was made because they are studying older women's engagement with food in different cultural and geographical places which provided different findings and insights into women's practices in relation to cooking in each article. Whilst this research is based within the UK, gaining a sense of the similarities and differences within the meanings of food for older women in different cultures can raise new considerations. Hocking et al. (2002) in their article 'The meaning of cooking and recipe work for older Thai and New Zealand women', acknowledged the challenges of trying to work cross-culturally however their awareness of this meant that there was a conscious approach to creating a structure with which they could ensure, to the best of their ability, that the studies were trustworthy and rigorous despite the challenges of working across countries.

A key feature of these articles that connects them to the background for this research (Chapter 2) is that they are written from an occupational science perspective. Occupations connected with food are a ubiquitous daily event therefore perhaps it is inevitable that it is of interest to researchers from a broad range of disciplines. When considered through the lens of occupational science it naturally provides a rich source of individuals' occupational experiences to explore, uncovering how related occupations interact and impact on themes such as gender, identity, roles, routines, and culture. Four of the articles discussed here focus specifically on festival food traditions in different countries (Hocking et al. 2002; Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; Shordike and Pierce 2005; Wright-St Clair et al. 2013). They reflect the diverse symbolism connected with food, the cultural meaning and how the women in the studies valued the occupations related to these traditions in different ways. The researchers focused specifically on women and festival celebrations as opposed to the 'daily' occupations of older people of any gender. Therefore, unlike this study, their focus is not just the 'everyday' food occupations of the participants.

Plastow et al. (2015b) approached their research with a wider remit of participants but still identified a focus on how identities of participants were maintained (or not) through their different food occupations. Results from the study suggested that occupational therapists would be well placed to consider the meaning of food for people's identities as well as the biological need for food thus providing a holistic way to address people's needs. The article does not specifically highlight an occupational science focus but draws on the work of Charles Christiansen, a prominent occupational therapist and researcher who has published work about the complexities of occupation and identity and whose work is intertwined with occupational science perspectives and emphasises the importance of understanding everyday occupations and their importance as a way in which people reflect and reinforce identities (Christiansen 1999). Food is an area of research interest to occupational scientists and therapists however in the articles reviewed here there is a specific focus on an aspect relating to food (i.e., identity) rather than taking a journey of discovery exploring individuals' experiences of food related occupations on a day to day, 'noticed but not seen' perspective (Hasselkus 2006).

With the majority of the articles there was an acknowledgement that there was a lack of ethnic diversity within their studies unless this had been a specific focus. Monturo and Stumpf's (2014) research involved older American veterans and had a small number of participants who identified within different ethnic groups other than 'white'. Overall though studies reflected a predominantly white middle class heritage for their participants, studies where the lack of diversity was specifically referred to include; Winter Falk et al (1996), Bisogni et al (2002), Genoe et al. (2010), Atta-Konadu et al. (2011), Delaney and McCarthy (2011), Lane et al. (2013), Host et al (2016b), Vesnaver et al (2016). However, the countries and areas where some of these studies were situated were also not particularly culturally diverse at the time the research was undertaken. Locations such as Norfolk (Lane et al. 2013) and Ireland (Delaney and McCarthy 2011) were noted by the researchers as having a lack of diversity which is not necessarily a problem when the study findings are couched within the knowledge that the results are representative of the local population and there is not an attempt to translate these findings into other cultural spheres. It does however raise an area that is perhaps less studied. Not something that will be specifically addressed within this research but perhaps something for future research consideration.

Another way in which diversity of participants could be questioned was in the mix of male to female participants. Ten studies specifically focused on women's experiences (Sidenvall et al. 2000; Sidenvall et al. 2001; Hocking et al. 2002; Shordike and Pierce 2005; Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Lane et al. 2014; Wright-St Clair et al. 2013; Vesnaver et al. 2015; Vesnaver et al 2016) of food, widowhood, or different food related tasks and only four focused on men's experiences of food occupations or of caring for a partner and taking on the role of managing food (Kullberg et al. 2010; Atta-Konadu et al. 2011; Newcombe et al. 2012; Monturo and Strumpf 2014). The numbers do not necessarily indicate that there is significantly more interest in women's practices than men's as some of the articles looking at women's food practices do stem from joint studies, just looking at different aspects. However, within the literature, as will be discussed shortly, there is a prevailing theme of food being 'women's work' therefore it is not totally implausible that this influences the

focus on women and food in research studies, though a new literature search would be required to fully explore this hypothesis. Vesnaver et al. (2016) in their study looking at the loss of commensality in widowhood, recognise that exploring the experiences of widowers could provide new and different insights. In addition to the male to female ratio within studies there is no representation of LGBTQ+ groups. This is something that is infrequently recognised within the limitations of studies, tending to more focus on ethnic diversity and numbers of men and women.

Most studies were small in scale with lower participant numbers which was congruent with the intention of qualitative research. The studies recognised that this meant that the findings were not generalisable to populations however this was not the intent. The studies provided deeper insights into the areas of lived experience of individuals.

One study by Mattsson Sydner et al. (2007) combined research across the UK, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Poland, and Spain, with a total of 644 participants. This was by far the largest study with the broadest range of different countries involved. It was acknowledged by the researchers that trying to ensure the research was carried out as consistently as possible across so many research sites and researchers was a significant challenge. Their own critique recognised that the country specific results could be viewed as superficial as they were summarised as 'style reports'. Therefore, the size of the study possibly lost some of the richness of data gained by studies involving smaller cohorts. There was a drive within Mattsson Sydner et al.'s (2007) work to gain depth using a life course perspective however, again the size of the study made this challenging. There are strengths however in the fact that this was a unique, large-scale project that enabled development of insights into ageing and food across multiple cultures.

Participants for studies were recruited by a range of means, each appropriate to the nature of each study. Some participants were involved in reviewing themes and data during the research to add to the trustworthiness of the findings (Genoe et al. 2010). However not all participant involvement in the development of the research was judged to be so beneficial from the perspective of reviewing the literature. In Lane et

al.'s (2013) Norfolk based study participants had been asked what name they would like used as their pseudonym. Whilst this was inclusive in terms of seeking participant involvement in more than the interview itself, it was not developing participant validation of findings and resulted in some participants choosing names which stood out. This made reading the work somewhat stilted due to stopping to consider the name selected, examples being; Bananas, Bubbles, Posh and Fritchie. This seemed unusual however the study itself was rigorously carried out.

Considering the methods used within the studies there was a mix of unstructured and semi-structured interviews and focus groups with one study also conducting observations of participants' cooking. The use of focus groups enabled discussion of different and similar food occupations to be explored by participants (Hocking et al. 2002; Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; Shordike and Pierce 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Host et al. 2016b). However, this method has the potential challenge that participants may not mention something due to worrying about the response of fellow group members. For example, in the studies examining women's festival food occupations (Hocking et al 2002, Wright-St Clair et al 2004, Shordike and Pierce 2005, O'Sullivan et al 2008), some women talked about how they did not want to burden their daughters with the same festival food occupations or perhaps how sons and daughters had changed traditions to meet their own needs. These topics could have been emotive, and participants may have curtailed discussion, concerned about judgement from fellow participants therefore there would have needed to be careful management of the focus groups. Studies predominantly relied on participants to recall their experiences using memory and verbal responses to interview questions whether in a structured format or not. Some participants were interviewed more than once (Winter Falk et al. 1996) and there were also longitudinal studies (Genoe et al. 2010, Atta-Konadu et al. 2011) which could allow for more recollections of different food related experiences or more evidence of food experiences changing over time in response to the individual's changing circumstances. The range of qualitative methods used elicited considerations of current and past food occupations experienced by participants. There were discussions around everyday practices however, whether the methods involved interviews or focus groups, there was a reliance on individuals being able to recall

information to share. This risks the minutia of the everyday, the potentially 'mundane' details not being revealed as they may not come to mind or not be felt to be important enough to share. The level of depth acquired in the studies enabled exploration of the topics however it is not known how much detail people may have omitted due to the routine nature of their food occupations.

Whilst methods used for this research will be discussed in depth in Chapter 4, the purpose of highlighting the methods used in this literature reflects how qualitative methods were appropriate for drawing out depth from participants, though most studies still relied on participant recall of information. The studies predominantly had a focus that was not the participant's everyday food occupations but their occupations considering a change in their lives or thinking about specific food occupations (e.g., festive food occupations). Therefore, the focus was not to specifically uncover daily embedded food occupations but to highlight new ones or ones that would 'stand out' as they related to a particular time or place. The influence on methods considered for this study was supportive of the use of qualitative methods but also to guide further consideration of different ways in which to reveal people's everyday food occupations where there is not a specific change or purpose to those occupations.

The 25 studies selected were robust in their explanation of their methods and findings and were therefore included in this literature review. There are strengths and weaknesses, more so for some than others however they all met the essential criteria and, importantly, all provided insight into different aspects of the role and meaning of food for older people.

The themes that were developed from reviewing the articles will now be discussed.

3.4.2 Role of Food

The role that food played in the lives of the participants within these studies encompassed a variety of different elements. Food played a role in people's identities, roles relating to gender, food being a source of pleasure or for some and being a source of fuel for others. Within these themes emerged subthemes such as how skills

and knowledge relating to food were linked to gendered. Each of these themes and subthemes will be discussed to gain a better understanding of the role of food in older people's lives.

3.4.2.1 Identity

Mealtimes and food occupations can be a chance for people to reaffirm and maintain identities (Genoe et al 2010; Plastow et al. 2015a; Plastow et al. 2015b). This could be through the language people use to describe themselves (Bisogni et al. 2002). For example, "I'm a meat and two veg person…" or "I'm a healthy eater" (Bisogni et al. 2002). These statements can convey images of what sort of person they might be, the former, possibly someone who likes traditional things and the latter as someone of restraint and control, managing to restrain themselves from unhealthy foods (Bisogni et al. 2002). Additionally, the everyday occupations as enacted by people in the studies were also ways of maintaining identity; shopping, preparing and cooking foods and eating were all ways that people could express themselves and reflect their identity outwards to others as well as reinforcing their food identities to themselves (Plastow et al. 2015a; Plastow et al. 2015b).

Some older people saw that food could play a role in helping them to maintain a healthy and independent lifestyle (Edfors and Westergren 2012; Host et al. 2016b). This could also extend to food occupations that were held as important such as shopping. Being able to continue shopping showed continued independence as well as reflecting the role of being the person who decided where to shop and what to buy and ultimately, what to eat (Sidenvall et al. 2001). Losing the ability to continue shopping would not just mean a loss of being able to choose foods easily but more significantly, for some people it could mean a change or loss of food identity (Sidenvall et al. 2001).

Food was also important to people's cultural identities and maintaining traditional food occupations could enable them to reinforce, both to themselves and others, who they were (O'Sullivan et al. 2008). Plastow et al. (2015b) proposed that their research participants could be categorised under three different identities; Food Lovers, Non-

Foodies and the Not Bothered. The foodies identified as people who loved everything about food and used food as a connection with others, it was a lifelong identity that did not change though possibly had to adapt in the face of change which could prove harder due to their long-held love of food. However Vesnaver et al. (2012) highlight that having knowledge about food, how to cook and being interested in food could also mean that people were likely to have more resources to draw upon at times of change which could mean that they were more resilient. Either way, maintaining the Foodie identity was essential for these individuals' wellbeing. The Non-foodie group was also deemed a lifelong identity (Plastow et al. 2015b). People who had never been bothered with food, continued to not be bothered with food and changes to their food occupations was not such a challenge to identity. Life course experiences are important to the development and reinforcement of food identities (Bisogni et al. 2002) and for the Foodies and Non-Foodies their identities appeared not to have significantly changed throughout most of their lives and not in older age. The final group, the 'Not Bothered' were people whose food identities had changed and had not reverted to their original food identity following change. An example of this could be a widow who had once identified as having the role of cook for the family (Shordike and Pierce 2005; Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007) but who, on finding themselves cooking for one could not be bothered and found alternative strategies to keep eating (Plastow et al. 2015b) but the original role was no longer sought or maintained.

The themes of culture, adapting to change, food for pleasure, food for fuel and gendered roles will all be explored further in following sections. However the number of ways in which identity can be maintained, changed, reflected outwards and reinforced inwards through food occupations is complex (Bisogni et al. 2002). The following themes are all important aspects of food and identity as discussed in the literature.

3.4.2.2   Gendered roles

There were several articles focusing on women's roles relating to food and a small number that were focused on men's experiences. The predominant theme throughout

these texts were that the traditional gender role for woman was as the main person involved with food occupations such as cooking and caring for the family through food and the men were the recipients and had minimal ability or interest with food occupations (Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007; Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Edfors and Westergren 2012).

For some women this role gave a sense of pride, a sense of belonging and of usefulness, they had their work to do within supporting the family unit and for many this role had started when they got married (Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007). This role was spoken of by women in the research studies but also reflected upon when participants, both male and female, looked back on the role that their mothers and grandmothers had had with food. For women, these were the gendered normative roles that they had had to model their own roles and food practices on and often involved cooking fresh food 'from scratch' for their husband and children (Shordike and Pierce 2005; Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007; Monturo and Strumpf 2014).

Consideration of how women may feel about handing on food roles to their daughters was viewed through the perspective of festive traditions (Christmas in New Zealand, USA and Canada, Songkran in Thailand). For some women talking about Christmas celebrations, they expressed relief at being able to pass on the food roles as it was seen as a lot of effort and very tiring (Shordike and Pierce 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2008). Some women also had a sense of guilt at handing on these roles to their daughters (O'Sullivan et al. 2008). For the women in the New Zealand study they did not have any expectations of passing on the Christmas food traditions as they accepted that things change and their daughters may want to do things differently with their own families (Wright-St Clair et al. 2013).

The older Thai women who took part in a study examining their food roles and occupations around the festival of Songkran, there was a contrasting response (Wright-St Clair et al. 2013). The women in the study had learnt the food traditions of Songkran from their mothers and grandmothers and now that they were older, they expected their daughters and granddaughters to help and learn the traditions so that

they could continue (Wright-St Clair et al. 2013). Even when someone was no longer able to carry out all the tasks themselves any longer, they still maintained the role of coordinating and directing the younger women (Wright-St Clair et al. 2013). Whilst the women in New Zealand, Canada and the USA has similar responses to the prospect of handing down Christmas traditions, the Thai women approached things very differently though one similarity highlighted was that all women did expect to have a role in overseeing the celebratory foods in some way (Wright-St Clair et al. 2013). Whether women expected to hand down their traditions or not, it was clear within these studies that women had taken a leading role in food occupations at festival times and could gain a great sense of pride and connectivity with their extended family through these practices.

For the men in the studies, some saw food occupations as women's work, feminine, and not something that they should be involved in to any great extent if at all (Kullberg et al. 2010; Atta-Konadu et al. 2011; Vesnaver et al. 2012). Though some would help their wives with tasks such as shopping but their wives would have written the shopping lists (Kullberg et al. 2011). Not all men however were so fixed in their views of food occupations, though there could still be a need to seek more masculine roles within this so as to maintain their identity as men (Newcombe et al. 2012). When men found themselves needing to take on food occupations either because their wives were unable to take on these tasks anymore (in the studies reviewed here this was specifically due to dementia) (Atta-Konadu et al. 2011) or following their wife passing away, there were differing responses.

In households where it had traditionally been the woman's role to be in the kitchen, it was more challenging for a husband to take on this role as it was difficult for their wife to relinquish it (Atta-Konadu et al. 2011). For some men, when their wives died they struggled as they had no cooking skills, they had not had this role and therefore their solution was to rely on ready meals (Vesnaver et al. 2012). However, for other men within this study they were not satisfied with having ready meals and decided to see if they could learn to cook, success with this leading to a continued development of a new skill and enjoyment from a new role (Vesnaver et al. 2012).

Whilst there was more limited discussion within the articles about men's responses to food occupations outside of the traditional roles of being a receiver of food, there were some emerging discussions showing men being more active in food roles. Kullberg et al. (2011) talked to older men experiencing somatic diseases and learnt about their experiences and identified that some of the participants had really enjoyed cooking and had even had a main role in cooking meals for the family over many years. Others may have only taken up cooking later in life but had gained confidence and enjoyed the newfound activity (Kullberg et al. 2010). Men could be identified as 'Foodies' just as much as women, talking about the enjoyment of all aspects of food (Plastow et al. 2015b) and for some, the loss of a partner could mean that they discovered something new and enjoyable that they had not experienced before (Winter Falk et al. 1996).

For women, the loss of their husband could create different challenges to their food identities. One of the ways in which women are suggested to maintain their food identities is through giving food to others (Host et al. 2016b). Therefore, the loss of a partner could mean the loss of an opportunity to cook for someone else and this could result in difficulties knowing what to cook (Sidenvall et al. 2000). The expectations of traditional gendered roles involve care giving and as suggested earlier, women's perception of what may be expected of them in terms of food occupations could be based on the gendered world they were raised in (Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; Vesnaver et al. 2015). This can result in a complex range of expectations and emotions encompassed within food roles so when these roles change following the loss of a partner it can be stultifying (Vesnaver et al. 2015; Vesnaver et al. 2016).

Where women had embraced the role of caregiver through food, the loss of their husband left them without really knowing or wanting to acknowledge their own preferences and food desires, having put these aside throughout their marriage, prioritising their husband's and children's foods (Vesnaver et al. 2015). For others however, where food occupations were not a role that had been embraced with pleasure, they had a sense of release from expectations around food (Winter Falk et al.

1996; Vesnaver et al. 2015), like the women who could pass on the tiring Christmas cooking roles to their daughters (Shordike and Pierce 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2008). There could however still be a sense of guilt for women who no longer cooked due to the pressure of it being seen as something that women should be good at doing (Vesnaver et al. 2015).

Gendered food roles were a prominent topic within the studies particularly in relation to responses following loss of a partner. This was predominantly from the perspective of women's experiences however there were a small number of articles considering different aspects of men's food experiences. The most common thread throughout the articles was that food occupations were women's work, loss of a partner could result in loss of role and identity or relief at being able to relinquish the role. For men, their food occupations were more centred around being recipients of their wife's cooking. The loss of a partner could result in an opportunity to develop an interest in a new activity that they could enjoy, or, their lack of food skill resulted in reliance on ready meals.

3.4.2.3 Food Skills and Food Knowledge

This theme relates to the previous theme of gendered roles as most references in this theme relate to women. Several studies identified the importance to identity of people's food knowledge and skills. For the Thai women in Hocking et al.'s (2002) study they were looked to for their knowledge and skills of the traditional food practices of Songkran, they knew where to get the best quality foods and they knew just how to prepare the foods.

Having the knowledge and skills to cook food from scratch was another area from which some women gained a sense of pride and importance (O'Sullivan et al. 2008). Women discussing recipes revealed the wealth of knowledge they held and enacted day to day (O'Sullivan et al. 2008). Recipe work was identified as something that can provide a sense of validation (Hocking et al. 2002). Identifying as a provider of food also reflected someone who was knowledgeable (Sidenvall et al. 2001) and it was

suggested that people with more skills and knowledge about food and cooking were more likely to be resilient to changes (Vesnaver et al. 2012).

Whilst knowledge and skills relating to food was a small aspect within the studies it does highlight another way in which food can play a role in someone's identity in older age.

3.4.2.4 Food as Pleasure

It has been discussed that some people identified as 'foodies' (Plastow et al. 2015b) enjoying every aspect about food and this was seen as a food identity that had been fixed throughout the individual's life. Where someone saw food as pleasure, health changes impacting on the food they could eat was challenging (Bisogni et al. 2002). One example talked of an older man who loved seafood, however his health needs meant he was no longer able to eat it, to compound this he then also lost his sense of taste (Bisogni et al. 2002). He chose however to continue to maintain many of his food practices even though he could not enjoy food in the same way as he used to but it was what made him feel like himself (Bisogni et al. 2002).

Health changes could make food work such as going shopping difficult. However, where food was an important part of life and identity, people, where they could, tried to continue these occupations (Lane et al. 2013). Enjoying food and associated activities could motivate people to maintain their engagement with food in older age (Vesnaver et al. 2012; Lane et al. 2013). Enjoyment of cooking for others could mean someone would prioritise this over other activities in the day (Vesnaver et al. 2012) and having a range of foods available could provide pleasure through the tastes and trying new things (Vesnaver et al. 2012; Lane et al. 2013). Changes such as retirement could open new opportunities for people to explore new foods, providing a new or renewed source of pleasure in older age (Delaney and McCarthy 2011).

Being a 'foodie' (Plastow et al. 2015b) and loving food and food occupations encompasses elements discussed in some of the other sections within this review. It is

another important role that food can play in people's lives and emphasises how central it can be to people's identities.

3.4.2.5   Choice

Choice of food in older age can be seen to reflect childhood food experiences (Delaney and McCarthy 2011). Homecooked food was frequently experienced growing up and was seen to influence older adults' preference for freshly prepared and freshly cooked foods (Edfors and Westergren 2012). In their theoretical paper; Constructing Food Choice Decisions, Sobal and Bisogni (2009) propose a food choice process model which recognises the complex range of influence on people's decisions about food. Whilst the article is not specifically considering people in older age, it is still applicable to people in later life. For example, a key component of the model is the influence of life course events on developing people's food choice decisions (Sobal and Bisogni 2009). Considering this for older people, the influence of childhood foods, transitions in life such as getting married, work and having their own children, may all have influenced people's approaches to food choice decisions.

Moving into retirement and potential health changes are another aspect of the life course that could be particularly relevant in older age (Sobal and Bisogni 2009). Sobal and Bisogni (2009) explore the ways in which individuals make choices and how they may make value negotiations on a regular basis. For example, home cooked food may be valued more highly than having processed foods but cost or time may be a factor that has to be part of the negotiations someone makes about what to have for dinner. The home cooked meal being the more valued but the latter being the more pragmatic. It is suggested that through these food choice decisions people's identities can be revealed and this echoes the work of Plastow et al. (2015b) in their research looking at identity maintenance connected with food in older age. Food choices may be made quickly but the underlying influences and importance to identity can be complex and multifaceted.

3.4.2.6 Social Act of Eating

Food played an important part in social situations and construction of social identity (Host et al. 2016b). Giving other people food was a way to show care, this could include the way food was presented as well as the food itself (Atta-Konadu et al. 2011). Being able to give and share food with others can maintain or create bonds and be an opportunity to talk and hear what's been happening in the day (Genoe et al. 2010). Both Atta-Konadu et al. (2011) and Genoe et al. (2010) were researching the experiences of partners and families where someone had a diagnosis of dementia. The social aspects of food were brought into focus considering the changing needs of participants, the opportunity for social contact and conversation over food was important.

Social eating can take place in several different ways and could provide a pleasant alternative to cooking at home when food preparation had become too difficult (Lane et al. 2013). Going out to eat to a café or pub was enjoyable for the social aspects but also for the fact that none of the preparation or tidying up after a meal would need addressing (Lane et al. 2013). Finding ways to improve someone's social aspects of food can help to bolster a person's resilience and interest in eating (Vesnaver et al. 2012).

For women whose husbands had died the opportunities for social eating, or commensality changed (Lane et al. 2013; Vesnaver et al. 2015) not only through the loss of their partner who they ate with on a regular, if not, daily basis but also because they could find their social circle changing. Social networks however are important for women in this situation to enable them to have different eating opportunities as well as company, giving time to adjust and work out the way forward (Vesnaver et al. 2015). Social connections in widowhood could also provide practical support in the form of helping with transport to shops, helping with shopping and sharing costs (Vesnaver et al. 2015).

3.4.2.7   Food as Fuel

In contrast to people who identified as foodies, there were studies where people spoke of never really being interested in food. Simplifying meals, using microwave food or going out to a lunch club were sought after alternatives to cooking, minimising the amount of time eating or dealing with food occupations (Kullberg et al. 2010; Plastow et al. 2015b). Lane et al. (2013) also found the women in her study, with no interest in food, reported that this had always been the case. The maintenance of identities as 'non-foodies' again being in line with Plastow et al.'s (2015b) work where certain food identities seemed to be lifelong for people. For people who had lost a partner and who had not learnt how to cook in earlier life, the lack of interest in food meant that there was little interest or motivation in learning cooking skills in later life (Vesnaver 2012).

Another way in which people were seen to treat food as fuel was where they implemented changes to their diets for health reasons. Older people wanting to use food to ensure that they remained healthy reviewed their diets and took actions such as reducing fatty foods, grilling things rather than frying and eating more fruit and vegetables (Delaney and McCarthy 2011). People also made changes to their diets due to medical diagnoses such as diabetes (Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Monturo and Strumpf 2014) and some people's health changes meant that they experienced fatigue which resulted in people not having the energy to cook meals from scratch, even if they had previously enjoyed cooking (Lane et al. 2013). The latter example appears to fit Plastow et al.'s (2015b) food identity category of 'not bothered' however the people who changed their diets to maintain their health, whilst putting effort into their food selection and preparation, do not seem to fit any of the three categories (foodies, non-foodies and not bothered). However, it is not known whether these individuals really enjoyed their healthy food or not so perhaps they would identify as 'foodies' if they were asked (Plastow et al. 2015b).

3.4.3   Main Theme: Meaning of Food

3.4.3.1   Symbolism

Food symbolised care for others, in Atta-Konadu et al.'s (2011) study where men were caring for their wives with dementia, preparing and sharing food with their wives was a

way to repay them for the years where their wives had looked after them. Food as a means of showing love and care was a repeated theme, whether this be exchanges between friends or family members (Sidenvall et al. 2000; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Monturo and Strumpf 2014). Where someone had taken time preparing a meal from scratch, cooking with fresh ingredients and then sharing the meal with their partner, family member or guest, the food was seen as a gift and sharing it was the best way to enjoy that gift (Sidenvall et al. 2000).

In addition to food as a gift and connection with others, food was used to symbolise different things for festive celebrations. Christmas cakes symbolised the festive season and festival symbolic foods were usually more expensive and elaborate (Hocking et al. 2002). For Thai women however the food shapes and the blends of food symbolised different traditional meanings such as long life and unity (Wright-St Clair et al. 2004). These foods were gifted to ancestors during Songkran and generosity was a fundamental concept in the Thai Culture (Wright-St Clair et al. 2004).

3.4.3.2 Routines, Rituals and Cultural Traditions

Following on from the symbolic meanings that food can hold, the use of food to maintain cultural traditions is another way that food can hold meaning. Religion can influence people's food practices, for example people following the Catholic faith may have grown up having fish on a Friday and carried this tradition on into older age, finding comfort in this (Delaney and McCarthy 2011). Going to church for Thanksgiving and celebrating with a feast, Christmas foods and the Thai foods celebrating Songkran (Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Monturo and Strumpf 2014) were all ways in which people talked about the importance of food for maintaining their religious traditions.

Food and the associated traditions on these occasions connected people with their ancestors and the younger members of the family (Hocking et al. 2002; O'Sullivan et al. 2008). There was a sense of responsibility for the women involved in these food traditions that they needed to hand down these traditions. Recipes were spoken of with enthusiasm and were also things that were pass down through generations

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"…recipes are encoded forms of cultural knowledge…" Wright-St Clair et al. (2004, p121).

Equally re-enacting food rituals that had once been shared with a now deceased partner, enabled widows to feel that they still had a bond with their partner after they had died (Vesnaver et al. 2016). The rituals of the family mealtime shared around the dining table were shared moments and opportunities to pass on family traditions to younger family members (Genoe et al. 2010). In Newcombe et al.'s (2012) study, some of the men talked about maintaining their traditional Irish food practices, preferring to eat plainer food and not wanting anything 'foreign', they felt this enabled them to maintain their personal and cultural identities.

Routines created in earlier life tended to be maintained in later life, for example the tradition of the Sunday Roast or eating three meals a day (Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Edfors and Westergren 2012; Host et al. 2016b). Maintaining routines gave some people a sense of security and a sense of identity within the family culture where the routines had been developed (Wright-St Clair et al. 2004; Genoe et al. 2010; Host et al. 2016b). The routine of eating at the table and of cooking food from scratch using fresh ingredients were other ways that people could maintain a sense of familiarity and security through food (O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Edfors and Westergren 2012; Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007).

People develop routines through 'food scripts' (Vesnaver et al. 2015), this is a pattern of behaviours that become routine, and therefore require less thought, for example going to get the breakfast might involve turning the kettle on, getting a bowl out, turning the radio on, and so on. Where couples develop scripts, the loss of a partner can interrupt these routine patterns. Someone might not know how to do the elements of the routine that their partner carried out previously so they may not be able to get food in the same way (Vesnaver et al. 2015) or it could mean that people develop new scripts, creating their own routines.

3.4.4   Themes: Older people and food

3.4.4.1   Ageing

Ageing impacted on people's food intake in different ways; health changes, age related changes such as reduced mobility, deciding to eat more healthy foods or shrinking appetites were all discussed (Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007; Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Edfors and Westergren 2012; Plastow et al. 2015b; Host et al. 2016b). Where people's food tastes and habits had not changed much since childhood, these new alterations to their food intake were more challenging to accept, could impact on self-esteem and on their willingness to accept help or support (Sidenvall et al. 2000; Edfors and Westergren 2012). Age related changes could impact on food occupations such as shopping, not just the types of food that people may eat (Sidenvall et al. 2001). Just as people wanted to maintain their food choices and could find it difficult to change them, people wanted to maintain their food shopping practices to be independent and purchase the foods they wanted (Sidenvall et al. 2001; Genoe et al. 2010).

Being able to continue food occupations conversely enabled people to feel a sense of productivity in older age (Plastow et al. 2015b) and for the women in Shordike and Pierce's (2005) study, getting older and still controlling proceedings relating to food at festival times could give a sense of being a leader, a matriarch of the family. Loss of a partner whether through death or divorce was one of the life changes that had the most significant impact on people's engagement with food (Sidenvall et al. 2000; Mattsson Sydner et al. 2007). Women who had had the main responsibilities for providing food for their husband could lose the sense of purpose and meaning to cooking. However, the lost pleasure of eating with a partner was seen as different from the pleasure that could be gained from the food itself which could remain unchanged (Vesnaver et al. 2016).

3.4.4.2   Adapting to Change

People adapted differently to the changes that happened through ageing and that impacted on their food and food occupations. Changes to identity in response to becoming ill could see people identify as healthy-eaters when once they were not (Bisogni et al. 2002). When people found themselves losing independence with food,

some were relieved to no longer had to try to manage whilst others worked hard to maintain their independence (Edfors and Westergren 2012). For some of the women in Lane et al.'s (2013) study there were a range of ways in which they tried to maintain independence or have some level of control over their meals; using smaller local shops, getting frozen meals delivered and attending lunch clubs. One participant said that they intentionally missed an item from their shopping each day so that they would have to go out again the next day, there was creativity in the strategies developed and adopted (Lane et al 2013).

Women adapted to widowhood using varying strategies. Losing a partner could make mealtimes dull and a resulting low appetite and low mood made it difficult to engage with food (Vesnaver et al. 2015; Plastow et al. 2015b). In their study looking at the food behaviour changes in later life, Vesnaver et al. (2015) proposed that women go through two stages. The first stage was temporary but could result in food consumption changing, this could start before their husband had passed away if he were very ill and needed care. Changes to routine following their husband's death could see women lessening the priority for food thus snacking and using convenience food during a period of transition. Gradually new patterns of food were established as women became more conscious that their temporary phase of eating was not sustaining them or was out of sync with their friends and family. Some women would re-establish their routines, adjusting them to cook for one, others however may develop new routines, perhaps going out for food more often or buying readymade meals as they no longer wanted to cook (Vesnaver et al. 2015).

The environment in which people ate their meals after the loss of a partner could make a difference to how they adapted to the changes, putting the TV or radio on for company for example (Vesnaver et al. 2012). Others may simplify meals or buy convenience foods that were selected with discernment and enjoyed them (Delaney and McCarthy 2011). People's differing levels of self-efficacy could impact on how much control they felt they could exert in relation to food tasks after a life changes (Vesnaver et al. 2012).

3.5   Conclusion

There are a significant number of ways in which food and food occupations played a role in older people's lives and the meaning it held for them. The literature reviewed predominantly focuses on specific aspects of food and ageing such as widowhood or illness. They reveal, through the changes taking place in people's lives, how food and food occupations can both be impacted by these changes but also how people may make changes to adapt to the challenges they are facing. A thread running through the literature is how complex people's interaction with food can be and that people's food identities can be static over the life span, flexing to cope with life events such as work and marriage but ultimately, if someone enjoys food and food occupations, it is likely that they will continue to do so throughout their lives. People's food identities can play a role in how they manage the changes that can be associated with older age such as bereavement. The literature explores the role of food for older people and to some extent the meaning it holds however this is predominantly in light of a change that has taken place. There is limited literature exploring the everyday food occupations for older people who are not experiencing change and who are independent and just 'carrying on' with daily life. This is therefore a less explored area and would benefit from investigation to understand the role and meaning of food for older people in the absence of difficulties.

3.6   Rationale for this research:

As discussed in the Background Chapter (Chapter Two) the increase in an ageing population has generated a drive to developing communities and environments that promote active and healthy ageing. There appears to be less focus specifically on what role food plays in an older, independent person's daily life and how this may be part of someone's sense of wellbeing and quality of life. Food is something that can be seen as commonplace and ubiquitous therefore may be overlooked. However, focusing on everyday occurrences can reveal insights into the importance of that occupation for an individual and also what meaning it has.

As has been discussed in the literature review, there is a paucity of research examining the everyday food occupations of independent older people. Research exploring the role and meaning of food for older people at times of change, has revealed how important food can be to exert choice, maintain identity, connect with others as well as being able to stay connected to cultures and traditions. Qualitative research methodologies and methods were used to develop these understandings, predominantly using focus groups and interviews.

When considering how to research people's everyday "seen but unnoticed" (Hasselkus 2006 p. 627) food occupations it was felt that interviewing people about what they did day to day may not be enough of a prompt for people to consider the tacit practices that they carry out. Therefore, consideration was given to more novel research methods that would hold the potential to uncover commonplace activities. The selection of the method used is discussed in more depth in Chapter 4, section 4.3.1 however it is noted here that participant-driven photo-elicitation was proposed as a novel way to approach the study. It is a method not used within the articles in this literature review and therefore held the potential to uncover different aspects of older people's experiences and to draw out different aspects that may perhaps not have been recalled during interviews and focus groups. Rather than relying on people's ability to remember details to discuss in interviews, photographs held the potential to enable people to notice details, to notice things that they saw everyday but would usually not 'see' and would not ordinarily think to mention.

The reasoning for researching the role and meaning of food for independent older people is that there is a gap in the current literature. If having autonomy over daily activities is something that can contribute to an older person's sense of wellbeing, then food is possibly one of the most common daily activities and is worthy of deeper exploration for older people who are living independently.

3.7 Aims and Objectives

Aim

This research aims to gain an understanding of the role and meaning of food for independent older people.

Objectives

- To recruit people aged 65 years old and over who are living in their own homes and who are independent with their daily food practices
- To carry out in depth interviews, with participants leading the interview through talking about their photographs
- To analyse the interviews to form themes that reflect the role and meaning of food for the participants.
- To interpret the themes to develop insights into the role and meaning of food for older people in the context of current literature.
- To develop recommendations from the interpretations for policy, practice and further research from the research

Chapter 4   Methodology

4.1   Introduction

This chapter explains the reasoning for the selected methodology and the subsequent methods and data analysis process. This research focuses on older people and gaining an in-depth understanding of their individual experiences of food within their day-to-day lives; what role it plays and what meaning it holds for them. It was not the aim to uphold or not uphold a hypothesis nor was it anticipated that statements applicable to larger populations would be the result of the research. Instead, the intention was to explore, in depth, individual and subjective experiences. Previous research in this field has principally focused on older people's food experiences from nutritional perspectives or at times of change because of medical diagnoses, loss of a partner, age-related decline, or moving into care. These studies have been predominantly undertaken through established research approaches, such as semi-structured interviews, maintenance of food diaries, or scientific analysis of food intake using quantitative research methods.

This research offers a different, less explored perspective, considering the day-to-day experiences of active older people who have remained independent, living in their own homes and communities. Taking a detailed, in-depth look at everyday food occupations can reveal new understandings, adding to the existing body of work. Consideration was given to different ways to gain these insights and it was decided that, in addition to the well-established methodology of interpretivist phenomenology, that participant-driven photo-elicitation was a more novel approach less frequently used with older people. Participant-driven photo-elicitation is a process whereby participants take photographs relating to the topic being researched, these photographs are then used to generate discussion in an in-depth interview. This enabled not only the examination of the role and meaning of food for the participants through a different 'lens' but also provided an opportunity to consider some of the benefits and challenges to using photo-elicitation as a data collection method with older people in food research.

4.2   Methodology

The underpinning intention of the research was to explore, in-depth, experiences of food and food occupations from the perspective of being an older person living independently at home. This required consideration of the philosophical position which the study adopted, which in turn directed the methodology to be used. Ontology is a term used to refer to the study of 'being', the philosophical exploration of existence and the nature of reality (Langdridge 2007; Holloway and Brown 2012), in simple terms, Brown and Duenas (2019) describe ontology as "What's out there to know". This research adopts a constructivist ontological position reflecting that there are many different realities in the world and they are socially constructed (Bryman 2012; Brown and Duenas 2019). Confusingly (for the novice researcher) constructivism can be referred to both when talking about ontological positions as well as epistemological positions (how knowledge is constructed) (Bryman 2012). However, in this study it is being referred to from an ontological standpoint. The world is socially constructed with multiple subjective realities, constantly being constructed by people and between people (Bryman 2012; Merriam and Tisdell 2016; Brown and Duenas 2019). A world where there can be many different experiences and interpretations of a single event (Merriam and Tisdell 2016). People's experiences of food and food occupations will be personal and individual however similar their lives may appear. For example, a group of people consumes the same meal yet their enjoyment of the food will be different, their likes, dislikes; associations with different food items; their experience of the environment; cultural differences. The different individual experiences could vary significantly.

These experiences can be interpreted in different ways and knowledge can be constructed from this process of interpretation (Merriam and Tisdell 2016). An individual's routine food occupations will have been shaped by events throughout their lifetime and the differing contexts that surrounded them as well as the worlds they are living in at the time of the research. This therefore holds the potential to be a complex and multifaceted exploration of something that presents as commonplace part of daily life (Mason 2002). In answer to the question "What's out there to know"

(Brown and Duenas 2019), people's 'food worlds' are being constructed through their subjective experiences and therefore there is much out there to know about what role and meaning food holds for them.

Having determined the study's ontological perspective, the epistemological position then needed consideration. Epistemology considers how knowledge is constructed, the nature of knowledge and when it is credible; what is known about the world, and how it is known (Langdridge 2007). Given that this research seeks to understand people's subjective experiences of food, the role it has and the meaning it holds in their lives, this means that, in order to know about this and to generate knowledge from this, there will need to be interpretation of their experiences. This therefore is positioned within an interpretivist epistemology.

The development of knowledge through an interpretivist epistemology focuses on understanding people and their experiences whereas if the aim was to explain people's behaviours and the external influences on their actions, this would require a positivist epistemology (Bryman 2012). Thus far the research has been positioned in an ontological world that is constructed by the subjective experiences of and between the individuals within it, providing a rich world to research. The epistemological stance is one that seeks to understand individual's experiences of food, interpreting them to generate knowledge.

The next consideration was what methodology would be aligned to the ontological and epistemological positions. To be able to generate knowledge from people's experiences there needs to be an aligned methodology (Brown and Duenas 2019), methodology being the overarching approach for gaining knowledge (methods are then the tools used to gather the data) (Brown and Duenas 2019). In this current research, food and food occupations could be seen as a phenomenon being experienced by individuals in their subjective worlds, in order to interpret people's individual experiences of this phenomena to develop knowledge from their experiences, the philosophical approach of hermeneutic, or, interpretive

phenomenology was adopted as aligned with the ontological and epistemological paradigm.

Philosophers have developed theories and language to explore their understanding of the everyday happenings in people's lives from the early 1900s (Langdridge 2007). Phenomenology's purpose is to understand an individual's everyday lived experiences, their perceptions, and what their worlds mean to them, in this instance their lived experience of food (Langdridge 2007; Finlay 2011). A phenomenological approach provides a way to gain a deeper understanding and insights of people's subjective experiences (Finlay 2011). Whilst a phenomenological methodology seemed to be where the study might be best orientated, a better understanding of phenomenology was needed to grasp the different aspects and reasons for pursuing this route. Phenomenology has evolved since its inception with philosophers developing different phenomenological perspectives and theories. Two overarching branches of phenomenology are descriptive and hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology (Holloway and Brown 2012).

Two of the most significant philosophers key to the development of phenomenology are Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger (Langdridge 2007). Husserl can be thought of as the 'Founder' of phenomenology and Heidegger as the 'Transformer' of phenomenology (Moran 2000; Langdridge 2007). There are tensions between Husserl's views of the world and Heidegger's (Langdridge 2007). Husserl's phenomenology being seen as more overtly linked to Cartesian philosophy (Moran 2000) where human consciousness is directed inwards with the awareness of thoughts and perceptions, rather than directed outwards towards the object that initiated those thoughts (Langdridge 2007). Husserl argued that when someone is conscious, they are always conscious of 'something'. The term Husserl used when talking about this concept was 'intentionality' (Langdridge 2007). He also developed the terms *Noesis* and *Noema* to consider the relationship between the experience '*Noesis*' and the way it is experienced '*Noema*' (Langdridge 2007). Understanding this relationship is *Intentionality*. The person is not the first focus in this way of considering experience, the experience itself is the initial starting point (Langdridge 2007). When thinking

about someone eating their dinner, the meal is the experience, the *noesis,* and how the individual enjoys the meal (for example) is the *noema*. Understanding the food and how it is experienced is *intentionality*. The meal is the initial focus here rather than the person experiencing the meal. Husserl later developed thinking that took the person outside of the Neoma and the Neosis, 'transcending' the experience itself and taking an outside perspective (Langdridge 2007). This is where phenomenologists began to 'part company' with Husserl turning to a more existential view (Langdridge 2007).

Heidegger and fellow philosophers such as Levinas approached phenomenology with the person still very much at the centre of the experience (Langdridge 2007); Heidegger emphasised the importance of positioning a person's experience within their world (Moran 2000; Langdridge 2007). Heidegger coined the term 'Dasein' which can translate as 'being there' or 'being-in-the-world'. Whilst Husserl's development of phenomenology focused on a description of experience, Heidegger argued that description naturally involved interpretation and one did not exist without the other, they were inextricably linked (Moran 2000). Gadamer and Ricoeur are two other philosophers of note who followed Heidegger and pursued the hermeneutic phenomenological path (Langdridge 2007). Another difference between the Heidegger and Husserl is the extent to which they believed it was possible to remove or 'bracket off' own perspectives and views when examining others' (Langdridge 2007). Husserl believed it was possible to remove personal perspectives entirely and put them aside when examining someone's experience, a more transcendental view, however, Heidegger (and other philosophers such as Satre and Marleau-Ponty) took a more existential view and felt that whilst it was important to try to 'bracket off' personal views and perceptions it is not always possible due to the human connections with the world around them (Langdridge 2007). Researchers should therefore strive to remove their views from their interpretations to be open to understanding other people's experiences of a phenomenon (Langdridge 2007). However, it must be acknowledged that it is not always possible, an awareness of this is however essential to try to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings (Finlay 2011).

Philosophers have interpreted the meaning of phenomenology in different ways and phenomenology has attracted criticism from different research branches such as the more scientific approaches of objectivism and positivism (Moran 2000). Questioning Husserl's phenomenological concepts left other philosophers asking how someone can ever expect to understand someone else's world if all thoughts and feelings were directed inwards. If people are so introspective as a species how can they ever truly be part of the world around them (Langdridge 2007). However, all branches of phenomenology have always had the individual, subjective, experience at the centre of its philosophy. Phenomenology has maintained a place in the methodological world by continuing to assert the importance of understanding this perspective (Moran 2000).

Considering the different branches of phenomenology, this study was aiming to understand phenomena through interpretation rather than through description. To understand the role and meaning of food for participants of the study, their lived experiences, centred in their worlds, would be explored and understood through interpretation. The chosen methodology for this research therefore is Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology as interpreted by Van Manen (2017).

4.3   Methods

4.3.1   Participant-Driven Photo-Elicitation

The current research used participant-driven photo-elicitation with in-depth unstructured interviews as the method for gathering data. The following section will explain further why this method was selected, consider why other methods were not used and describe how the data was collected.

Whilst considering what methods would be most consistent with a phenomenological approach the following statement from Van Manen (1990) was considered; "The method of phenomenology is that there is no method…" (p30). This was both potentially freeing yet also daunting as a novice researcher. There needed to be a way to research the everyday lived experiences of people to understand their worlds, their

day-to-day experiences of food and food occupations, however, as has already been acknowledged in Chapter 2: Section 2.4, the very nature of the experiences being 'everyday' may in itself make it more challenging for people to articulate due to much of the experience happening without really being seen or acknowledged. Returning to phenomenological perspectives to help consider the foundation that the research is being built upon, Heidegger described the meaningfulness of phenomena as something that fades in people's lives as other things become more of a focus (Wright-St Clair 2012; Van Manen 2017). This is not about things being forgotten just 'fading' and becoming commonplace. Van Manen (2017) reflects that, if things did not fade, then there would be no need for phenomenology as everything would be seen and would be explicit, no uncovering of hidden meanings would be necessary. Food, as has already been discussed in the Background (Chapter Two), is something that is an everyday, commonplace occurrence. The meaning of food in day-to-day life may not be something that people spend time reflecting on and considering in depth and therefore could be said to have faded. The challenge, from a research perspective, is how to uncover these meanings in a way that does not rely on making someone reflect on the meaning first (Van Manen 2017). The moment someone steps aside from experiencing the phenomena, to reflect on its meaning, the phenomena is no longer being experienced, or 'lived' (Wright-St Clair 2012; Van Manen 2017). There is therefore a need to consider research methods that will enable the faded meanings of food to be uncovered as the subjective lived experience, being lived 'in the moment' rather than a detached, impersonal reflective account (Van Manen 2017).

4.3.2   Participant-Driven Photo-Elicitation: How to re-frame the mundane.

To uncover the meaning of food for individuals and generate knowledge about the role it played in participants' lives, methods such as semi-structured interviews or focus groups could have been used. These are methods that have been successfully employed in other studies examining different aspects of people's experiences of food (Mannay 2010; Wright-St Clair 2012; Vassenden and Jonvik 2020). However, the topic for this study was likely to be considering many daily food-related activities that could be commonplace and mundane, things that were always done without much conscious thought (things that have 'faded'). Using research methods that are solely based on

verbal interactions with participants relies on them being able to articulate things that are so ingrained in their lives that they do not think to mention them and also could result in losing the moment of the lived experience (Van Manen 2017; Eyres et al. 2019) As described by Power (2003) in relation to her experience of researching the experiences of single mothers trying to feed their families;

> "…I had the distinct impression that the participants knew more than they were able to put into words and tell me about their food-related practices….the language doesn't exist to express our experiences, we "translate" into the closet available words, losing parts of that experience…" (Power 2003 p. 10)

Focus groups equally rely on being able to verbalise personal experience and were also not consistent with the methodology seeking to uncover individual experiences. There could be a risk that the richness of personal experience could be lost and participants may not want to discuss different food practices or preferences in front of others, censoring what they would say in a focus group situation (O'Connell 2013; Eyres et al. 2019).

Use of food diaries has been another way for researchers to capture a record of the foods that people have. This was given some consideration, however, whilst people may take notes of things as they happen, therefore capturing routine food activity, this does not necessarily align so suitably with the chosen methodology as people may not think to write things in detail due to the nature of it being 'commonplace'. It was considered that this had the potential to be too restrictive to capture data that aimed to bring richness and depth to the work. Van Manen (2017) states that;

> "Phenomenology aims to capture the instant moment: The now" (Van Manen 2017 p. 813)

To achieve this 'capturing of the moment', attention turned to the possibility of using photography as a means of capturing participants' lived food moments. Freezing the moment of experience in time so that it could then be used as a foundation for an interview. Photographs used as part of the interview process can provide a visual prompt to enable participants to recall moments of lived experience and bring the

'faded' meanings back into the moment of the interview. Participant-driven photo-elicitation is a method that transcends language, age and culture (Sweetman 2009; Tishelman et al. 2016) and offered a novel way to explore older people's food experiences as well as being aligned to the selected methodology.

Occupational scientists discuss human occupations in terms of 'doing, being, becoming and belonging' (Wilcock 1999) as all being ways that participating in occupations is essential to wellbeing. However, as Bourdieu (Power 2003; O'Connell 2013) highlights it can be challenging for people to articulate the 'doing' of occupations that are everyday things. The same could be said of 'being, becoming and belonging' how to articulate these ways in which occupations are ingrained within lives of individuals. This is another way in which photographs can provide, to a degree, a bridge between the unspoken aspects of an occupation and the way in which they may tell the interviewer about their experiences. The use of photography in the occupation focused study of religion "An Understanding of Religious Doing: A Photovoice Study" Eyres et al. (2019) is just such an example of how photo-based research can illuminate the doing, being, becoming and belonging of human occupations.

As has been discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4, that researching the everyday necessitates making commonplace daily activities seem somehow different, finding a way for people to view things differently (Sweetman 2009). Occupational scientists and Occupational Therapists alike have used different methods to uncover the experiences of people carrying out their daily occupations and there has been recognition of the benefits of using visual methods for research in this area (Hartman et al. 2011). As discussed by Huot and Rudman (2015) there is a need to find ways to research everyday occupations that can enable the researcher to get beyond the feedback given in an interview or trying to observe someone's personal experience. Understanding the meaning that occupations hold for someone is complex and needs methods that will provide a way to discover these embedded experiences (Hartman et al. 2011; O'Connell 2013; Huot and Rudman 2015; Bromann Bukhave and Huniche 2016). From an occupational science perspective there is recognition and exploration of the potential power of visual research approaches to explore everyday occupations

(Hartman et al. 2011; Huot and Rudman 2015; Bromann Bukhave and Huniche 2016; Eyres et al. 2019). It is proposed that not only can visual methods provide a way to convey experiences without needing to be able to articulate or identify the details that are hidden in the 'everyday-ess' of the occupation but visual methods can also enable the participant themselves to view their worlds differently (Hartman et al. 2011; Bromann Bukhave and Huniche 2016).

Food can be seen for only a short period of time, ephemeral; it is cooked, served and then, usually, consumed and thus disappears leaving only traces of its existence. Even if a meal is cooked again, it is unlikely to look the same as the previous version unless created in a restaurant. Therefore, not only can food be part of everyday commonplace practices, but it could also be something that, at the point of interviewing someone, is unobservable if the food has been consumed (Pink 2021). Someone may try to describe a meal that they had cooked or a food item they had particularly enjoyed but it may be challenging to really convey fully what the scene entailed, however, capturing the moment in a photograph enables someone to share the image, to take the researcher into their world for a moment (Sweetman 2009, O'Connell 2013, Huot and Rudman 2015; Bromann Bukhave and Huniche 2016; Pink 2021). Food is a multisensory experience so there will be elements that are impossible to describe but providing an image can support a fuller sense of the moment (Spencer 2011). The challenge therefore is to enable someone to both convey a clear sense of the food they discuss but also to help both participant and researcher to notice tacit details, to turn a familiar scene into something that feels new and less observed (Sweetman 2009).

As Mannay (2016) explores in her work, visual methods can be a way to approach "…the problematic nature of familiarity, perspective and positionality" (Mannay 2016, p. 27). Mannay (2016) is exploring some of the challenges posed by being an 'insider' within the area being researched, where everything can feel very familiar and can lead to things being taken for granted and assumptions made that the researcher and / or the participant will know something already so things can be left unsaid. In these

situations, Mannay (2016) proposes that use of visual methods holds the potential to reduce these pitfalls of researching a world that is very familiar.

In this research, whilst the participants were not known prior to the study and their food choices and occupations were previously unexplored, there was a familiarity to the setting of interviewing older people in their own homes (this is explored further from a reflexivity perspective in section 4.7). Therefore, it could be suggested that, whilst the topic and participants were not familiar, there was still a sense of 'insiderness' (Mannay 2016) in the context and process of interviewing older people in their own homes about their everyday occupations. Use of images could act to make the process unfamiliar, changing a recognizable interaction into a more unique one and shifting the power into the hands of the participant; "…the use of visual methods as a tool of defamiliarization…" (Mannay 2016, p. 41). Equally the use of photographs could also hold the potential of making the subject matter 'de-familiarized' to the participant, making them view their food experiences differently and with a more novel perspective, making them more of an outsider to their own occupations.

The use of participant generated photographs also anchored the conversation in the individual's experiences, as Spencer (2011) notes, there is an opportunity to develop "…vivid and authentic personal narratives…" (Spencer 2011, p. 33) using participant developed images. Pre-conceived thoughts and prior experiences of the researcher needed to be put aside and any risk of this not being successful could be circumvented by a participant showing their photographs as clear evidence of their personal experience (Mannay 2016). Striving to engage people as active participants in the research attunes with a person-centred approach, something that is held central to the working practices of occupational therapists as discussed in Chapter 2 Section 2.4 (Hammell 2007; Lal et al. 2012). There can be power dynamics in the relationship between an occupational therapist and the individual they are working with, one experiencing a challenge or difficulty of some kind and the other potentially holding the power to change this (Hammell 2007). This power imbalance could also be said of the researcher-participant dynamic where a participant may be seen as a source of information to be mined with the researcher taking away the findings leaving the

participant with little sense of active involvement (Power 2003; Hammell 2007). However, this is something that needs to be challenged both within occupational therapy practice and research (Lal et al. 2012). In this study the participants are the experts in their food occupations, they hold the power and knowledge. Therefore, use of participant generated photographs would seem an appropriate method to hand control to the participants to develop the focus of the interviews, create and select photographs and not be led by a pre-formed interview script.

The use of photography within research has grown over recent years (Sweetman 2009) with a particular increase seen in ethnographic research and health and sociological studies (Torre and Murphy 2015; Pilcher et al. 2016; Vassenden and Jonvik 2020; Pink 2021) and an emergence of occupational science and occupational therapy literature exploring visual methods (Hartman et al. 2011; Lal et al. 2012; Huot and Rudman 2015; Bromann Bukhave and Huniche 2016). With its roots in anthropology and sociology the value of using images to explore people's lives and experiences has been recognised as a means of illustrating the depth of lived experiences reflecting its consistency with the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the study (Lal et al. 2012; Bugos et al. 2014; Torre and Murphy 2015; Pilcher et al. 2016; Guest 2016). There are different terms used for research using photography to explore a chosen topic, two central terms are photo-voice and photo-elicitation.

Photo-voice was first used in action research by Wang and Burris in the late 90s when working in China in the field of women's reproductive health (Wang 2006). Photo-voice as a method is associated with studies working with marginalised groups where the groups take photographs of their circumstances that can be used to explore and highlight issues. This is seen to be a way of raising and addressing social injustice and is linked with social movements (Wang 2006; Pickin et al. 2011; Kohon and Carder 2014). John Collier was the first person to put a name to 'photo-elicitation' in a paper in the mid-1950s (Harper 2002) working in the field of visual anthropology. Collier found photo-elicitation a successful way to interview participants in his research studies (Harper 2002). In this study participant-driven photo-elicitation was used rather than photo-voice as the aim was not to 'mobilize community action' (Wang 2006) but to

explore individual experiences. Participant-driven photo-elicitation was therefore also a better fit with the intentions of the research in terms of understanding the individual subjective experience of food.

Photo-elicitation has been used as a research method in a small number of studies to explore people's relationships with food and nutrition. These studies have had varying focus', for example; exploring different cultures, food behaviours of women in substance-abuse recovery, homelessness and food experiences and the role of food in family relationships for obese adolescents (Lachal et al. 2012; Wall-Bassett et al. 2014, Ramalho et al. 2016). The participants range in ages from children to people in their eighties however there are fewer studies only including people aged 65 years or older. The studies were conducted in different countries with few based within the UK. Justesen et al. (2014) used participant-driven photo-elicitation to gain an understanding of people's experiences of hospital meals in Denmark which had the inclusion of older people as well as those under 65 years old however this was focusing on food within an institutional setting rather than the community. Photo-elicitation was used within the potentially sensitive area of end-of-life care, enabling participants to explore their environments (Tishelman et al. 2016). The research team found that using photo-elicitation had a broader appeal than the research methods they had previously used which were language rather than image-based. Participants wanted to take part because they were able to be physically involved with the process. They were able to be creative at a time when they were losing the ability to participate in many activities. It gave a meaningful task that participants could immerse themselves in. Whilst the participants in the current research were fit and well, the concept of providing them with the opportunity to be immersed in the study was another positive aspect of using photo-elicitation and offered the potential of gathering maximum depth of data.

UK based research using visual techniques to investigate different aspects of people's food lives that included people 65 years and older (as well as younger participants) was carried out by Wills et al. (2016a) at Hertfordshire University. They studied domestic kitchen practices as well as exploring 'Food Provision in Later Life' focusing on how

older people acquired food. Researchers accompanied the participants and took photographs of their experiences rather than participants producing their own images, this is an ethnographic method of developing visual data called the 'go-along' method. The photographs were used as part of an exhibition where visitors were taken from 'home to shop' through a series of images, videos, stories and a physical layout that enhanced the scene. Photographs were one part of the studies (used alongside diaries and interviews, providing a range of data) but an essential component for conveying information from the participants to both members of the public as well as a wide range of stakeholders (Wills et al. 2016a). Results from research led to suggestions for improving older people's access to food by influencing policy. It also led to developing a game that engaged a range of different people employed within sectors working with older people, to engage them in an innovative way to consider some of the barriers and enablers to food shopping in later life. The use of imagery enabled findings to be disseminated in a creative and interactive way, this was interesting when considering the potential for the current research, it was also encouraging to see how involved participants appeared to be.

Reviewing previous research where older people have been participants in studies using either photo-elicitation or photo-voice research, it would appear to have been a successful process (Novek et al. 2012; Justesen et al. 2014; Pilcher et al. 2016; Wills et al. 2016a; Rayment et al. 2019; Mysuk and Huisman 2020). Concerns observed in some research about how successfully older participants would be able to engage with the use of photography for research seemed unfounded (Novek et al. 2012). Participants raised some concerns (Novek et al. 2012) but these were often about pragmatic issues such as how to use the camera and where they could seek technical support. Once people had gained reassurance, they felt happy to proceed. Novek et al.'s (2012) study used photo-voice to engage older people photographing their communities to see how age-friendly they were. Amongst the conclusions from the study was that this method was a powerful way for the participants to communicate their thoughts about their communities to policymakers; images provided depth and conveyed information in a different way which enabled stakeholders to engage differently with the research outputs. These findings were consistent with later studies

by Wills et al. (2016a) and across the literature reviewed by Mysuk and Huisman (2020) in their paper considering the use of photo-voice with older people.

Interviews can have a more distinctive separation of roles between the researcher and the researched, making it a potentially unequal alliance (Power 2003; Burton et al. 2017). Participant-driven photo-elicitation enabled participants to have control over both the photographs they chose to take as well as what they chose to then talk about in the interview, they are in effect steering the research (Power 2003; Pilcher et al. 2016). There is a sense of ownership and partnership in the process which is not necessarily possible with some other forms of research. This follows the interpretive phenomenological approach as there can be a sense of co-creation within this philosophy (Langdridge 2007).

Participant-driven photo-elicitation was therefore used within the current research with unstructured interviews being the method of gathering data. Prior to participants starting to take their photographs however there were some practical steps that needed to be taken to ensure participants felt confident and comfortable with what they were going to do (see section 4.5 for Sample and Recruitment information). During the initial meeting it was ensured that the person fully understood what was involved, the camera functions were discussed to ensure that they were comfortable with how to use it and a consent form was signed (with the participant having a copy of all paperwork). Participants were loaned the digital camera (Sony Cybershot, Sony UK) and charger and were informed that the researcher would contact them in approximately a week's time to make sure that everything was alright and to see if they wanted to keep the camera for longer. The participant had phone and email contact details for the researcher and were assured that they could contact if they had any questions or concerns.

Within this study, participants' only real concern about using the camera was the fact that they sometimes forgot to take a photograph, especially when eating outside of the home. They did not appear unduly worried about this, it appeared to be an amused frustration, especially if it happened more than once. This did not seem to

significantly impact on the research as participants still verbally shared these moments where they had forgotten to take a photograph. Participants were keen to ensure it was still part of discussion and whilst not the same as being able to illustrate their descriptions with photographs, it was not such a frequent occurrence that it detracted from the overall interview. Additionally, participants were resourceful and took photographs on phone cameras if they forgot the camera loaned for the study or made quick notes about what they had eaten and where they had been at the time.

Photographs produced by the participants were used to support the interviews and generate discussion but were not themselves analysed (Mannay 2010). Participants were asked to take photographs at any time of day or night where they associated the situation with food (including drinks). Images could be of the food itself and occupations or objects participants connected with food (e.g., crockery or a shopping bag). Initially, participants were going to be asked to take photographs for seven days to provide a degree of structure, however, this was soon discovered to be somewhat restrictive. Reviewing this after the first participant's experience, it highlighted the benefits of participants having the cameras for longer. It enabled them to get used to remembering to take photographs and there were food situations (such as attending a social eating event) someone might want to include in the photographs but that might not have happened within the seven days of having the camera. The first participant raised these considerations and consequently kept the camera for longer and all subsequent participants were also able to keep their cameras for as long as they needed to.

In addition to the pragmatic reasoning for not restricting the participant images to seven consecutive days, this also raised an important methodological point. The aim was not to be able to compare different people's experience of food over a seven-day period, or to evaluate what someone ate within a specific time frame, the aim was to understand the subjective experiences of the individual participants. Other than for pragmatic reasons of managing timings around the research process there felt limited justification for imposing a time-limit on how long someone took photographs. This approach felt more aligned with the research being guided by participants in terms of

empowering them to choose what to photograph as well as choosing when to take photographs and for how long (Justesen et al. 2014; Pilcher et al. 2016). On a practical note, not imposing a specific time limit for taking photographs was also beneficial when participants experienced ill health (e.g. having a cold) as they did not need to worry about trying to remember to take photographs until they were well. Once the participant felt they had taken all the images they wanted, the camera was collected, and images downloaded. Images were printed A5 size and put into a small ring binder enabling participants to easily look back through the images. The number of photographs generated by participants varied considerably from 28 – 152.

4.3.3   Interviews

Whilst participant-driven photo-elicitation was used as a more novel way to engage participants in the research and create a more equal partnership between researcher and participant, the main method of gathering data were the unstructured interviews. Once the photographs had been downloaded and printed a date was set for the interview to take place. Initially, it had been anticipated that a simple set of questions would be asked as well as being printed and displayed in front of the participant to prompt discussion of the images that the participant selected to talk about. The questions were guided by Wang and Pies (2004):

- o   What do you see in this photograph?
- o   Tell me the story of this photograph?
- o   Can you talk about what this means to you?
- o   Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this photo?

Following the first interview it became swiftly apparent that the participant actively led the discussion with little prompting being needed from the researcher as they were keen to talk through their photographs. The photographs worked as intended and elicited discussion. Therefore, with the next participant the set of questions were still placed, visible for reference by researcher and participant should there be any difficulties with thinking about what to say but again the participant led discussion using the photographs as the prompt. Interview lengths ranged from 41 minutes to 2

hours (the average length of interview was 1 hour 15 minutes). Participants were asked which photographs they wanted to discuss with a minimum of 5 being suggested. However, most participants went through all their images and spoke about them in turn. There can be challenges to participants using all their photographs if they have produced a particularly high number of images as it runs the risk of not being able to gain enough depth to the discussion (Justesen et al. 2014). However, this was not a problem in this research as the participant who took the most images (152) was selective and did not decide to go through each image, instead he chose specific ones to talk about.

Other than the previously referred to four 'prompts' (Wang and Pies 2004) to support participants when reviewing their images there was no specific interview guide. Interviews took more of a discursive nature with participants talking through their photographs and questions being asked in response to this. This is consistent with the methodology in terms of wanting to understand the role and meaning of food for older people through their experiences. Semi-structured interviews are constructed prior to the interviews taking place therefore are naturally, to a degree, led or directed by the researcher (Bates et al. 2017). The balance of power between participant and researcher remains more in the researcher's hands which is not the aim of participant-driven photo-elicitation. The aim was to uncover new understandings about the role and meaning of food for older people therefore guiding the interview with researcher led questions could mean that these insights may not be developed (Bates et al. 2017). This is also supported by the approaches discussed by Gadamer another hermeneutic phenomenologist whose views were mainly aligned with Heidegger and encompassed in some of Van Manen's literature (Langridge 2007). Gadamer suggested that having a fluid approach to interviews was appropriate and the researcher may be more involved in the interview, giving more of themselves as part of the development of depth of discussion and meaning (Langridge 2007).

The discussion that took place as the interview developed meant a natural 'to and fro' between participant and researcher with any questions being asked in response to a participant's discussion of their photographs, exploring their interpretations and

experiences (Smith et al. 2012; Willig 2013). This more conversational, discursive approach to interviewing aligns with the interpretive phenomenological approach that conversations can be a way to develop an understanding of existence (Langdridge 2007)

Interviews were recorded using a small Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (VN-741PC) which was unobtrusive. Audio interviews were then downloaded onto a secure password protected computer.

Feedback from participants was that it was an interesting way to take part in the research. Cameras are not new technology and were easily adopted by participants to capture a variety of different images. The sense of being in control of the photographs and the subsequent selection of topics to discuss appeared to be something participants engaged well with and enabled a focus on each individual's experience as well as depth of data.

"Well, I'm not sure what…what use or value this is going to be to you or to anybody else but it's been quite an insight for me. And…using the camera…well, it was easier than keeping a diary of what I ate and it was more of an accurate picture, in a way, of what I've eaten for that period of about a week. And to start with I kept going you know this is a bit of a bind, where is the camera, you know, I've got to get it out, I've got to take it with me or remember it. But then I got interested. So I found it quite an interesting experiment for me, from my point of view…" Ruth (pseudonym)

"Well I had no idea what it would involve…. I mean if you wanted someone to interview was over 80 then… I was over 80. Cause I have always been into photography so I have done over the years I have done a lot photography. The company and just …somebody to talk to as well is good it's just being involved in something I suppose is the main thing…I just thought it would be interesting. It has been…" David (pseudonym)

4.4 Ethical considerations

Bournemouth University Research Ethics Committee Approval was given for this study (Letter of Ethics Approval Appendix G), Ethics Approval reference 16686 issues 14th August 2017. There were several ethical considerations for this study, particularly given the photographic element of the research which can raise specific ethical considerations. The different ethical considerations will now be outlined with information about how they were addressed.

4.4.1 Participants: Informed Consent

For participants to make fully informed decisions as to whether to take part in a research study they need to understand what the study would involve, what it would require them to do and any potential risks for them (Crow et al. 2006; Wiles et al. 2007; Klykken 2021). Participants need to have time to consider this information to decide whether they would want, and be able, to take part in the research and up to what point they would be able to withdraw from the study should they change their mind (Crow et al. 2006; Wiles et al. 2007; Klykken 2021). Participants also needed to understand what would happen to their photographs and interview data and the potential risks of being identified. Despite the use of pseudonyms there was the possibility of an image showing something identifiable and attributable to an individual thus making total anonymity not something that could be promised. Therefore, a Participant Information Sheet was created to ensure that any potential participants had information about the nature of the study and their role within it should they decide to take part (Participant Information Sheet Appendix I).

Developing the participant information sheet raised dilemmas with regards to how much information to include as there was a desire to provide every detail of every potential challenge or difficulty that might arise almost as if informing someone of the risks of an invasive medical procedure. This was highlighted when the Bournemouth University Ethics Panel reviewed the application for approval. The panel's advice was to make the information more succinct as the original submitted draft was too lengthy

for potential participants to engage with. A balance needed to be struck between ensuring participants were fully informed about the study but also not raising unnecessary anxieties (Wiles et al. 2007) or, as raised by Crow et al. (2006) not becoming patronising or annoying by frequently asking if the person understands the risks as this could interfere with the partnership working between researcher and participant. As Wiles et al. (2012) also discuss, it is not possible to identify all risks relating to a study, there is only so much that can be predicted as there is always the potential for something new and unexpected to arise. Participants equally may not consider the risks in detail (despite being outlined in the Participant Information Form) unless they have undertaken a similar study previously (Wiles et al. 2012). This is another reason for ensuring that participants have opportunities to raise concerns as they get further into the study, to feel that they can ask questions and withdraw if necessary.

Potential participants responded voluntarily to the recruitment drive which was carried out through fliers disseminated in areas such as a gym café, a library, and a resource centre as well as e-fliers being circulated through organisations such as Age UK and a Horticultural Society. When someone contacted to ask more about the study, they were verbally given an outline of what would be involved and if they wished to find out more a Participant Information Sheet (revised from the original form and approved by the Ethics Committee) was sent to them either by email or post depending on their expressed preference. Approximately a week later they were contacted again to see if they would like to move to the next stage or whether they had decided that it was not something they wished to continue with. If anyone had wanted more time to consider participating, they would of course have been given this and asked whether they would want to be contacted again or whether they would prefer to contact when they had decided one way or the other, no one in this study requested additional time to consider and had either decided to participate or not. Some people did not want to proceed, and they were thanked for their interest and any contact details destroyed. It was important to give people the time they needed to consider the information and ask further questions if needed before they decided

whether to participate. Rushing anyone into participating would not be good practice (Wiles et al. 2007).

For people who wanted to participate, an appointment was made to meet at a location and time that was chosen by the person (this ranged from people's own homes and local cafes). At this meeting the Participant Information Sheet was discussed, and any questions answered. If people wanted to have more time to consider their participation, then it would have been given however all ten participants wanted to continue with the study following the initial one to one meeting. Participants were asked to sign a Participant Agreement Form (Appendix K). They received a copy of this to keep for their own records. At this same meeting participants were shown the digital camera that they would use for the study and were talked through how to use it. Participants were asked if they wanted to take a test picture which some did with others stating that they were used to using digital cameras and did not feel it necessary.

Figure 1 Test Photograph by Frank
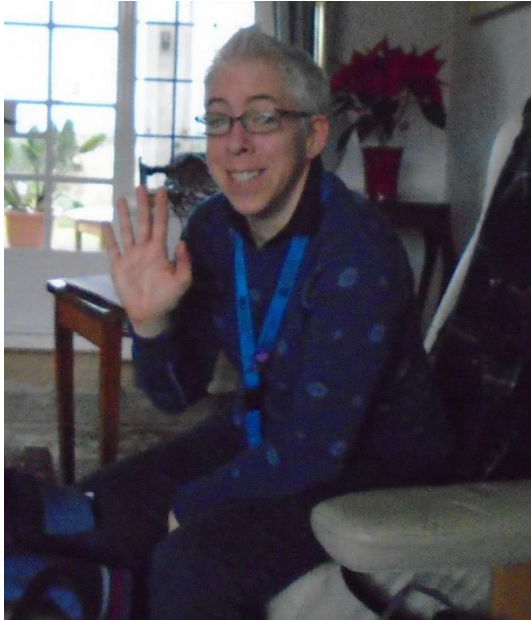
Figure 2 Test Photograph by Derek (Sophie the Researcher)

Once participants ensured that they had all questions answered, were happy to sign the consent form and felt comfortable with how to use the camera, they were left to independently start the process of photographing their food and food occupations. These initial meetings ranged from 15 minutes to an hour and a half where the participant wanted to discuss their interest in food before starting the process of taking photographs.

Participants had email and office phone contact details should they need to ask for any guidance or advice and approximately a week after leaving the camera with the participant, contact was made to check that they were managing the project and whether they had any questions or if they wanted to continue or stop. Participants wanted to continue taking photographs at this point and were happy to make contact when they felt they had finished. If participants seemed to be keeping the cameras for several weeks, contact was made to make sure everything was alright. One participant had had flu and therefore wanted to keep the camera for longer so that they could take some photographs once they were well again.

Once participants reported that they had taken all the photographs they wanted to, a time was arranged to visit to collect the camera. This was another opportunity to

'check in' with the participant to see how they were finding the process. Participants were all interested to see their images; two participants had removed the memory card from the camera so that they could view their images on their computers (they had returned the memory cards to the camera afterwards). One participant, frustrated with forgetting to take the camera out when eating at cafes and restaurants, had taken photographs using their phone and then emailed these few images, these were added to the ones downloaded from their camera. One participant had made a couple of notes about what food they had eaten when finding themselves without the camera on a day out and another participant had chosen to download all the images and create their own detailed, illustrated, daily diary in a word document as they wanted to give the details of exactly what food and drink had been consumed. Participants appeared to feel a sense of ownership over what they were doing to the extent that they took independent decisions about how to manage when forgetting the camera and how they felt information should be given for the study.

Once the camera had been collected from a participant the images were downloaded, printed within a secure work environment, and collated into an A5 ring binder in the order that photographs were taken. Another meeting was arranged with the participant (at a time and location nominated by the participant) to return with the images and to carry out the interview part of the process.

There were therefore at least three in-person meetings with each participant (two prior to the interview itself) as well as email and / or phone contact throughout the process. This enabled multiple opportunities to ask questions, raise any concerns or to ask to stop the study. No participants withdrew from the study at any point of the process. Therefore, whilst the initial concerns raised by the Bournemouth Ethics Committee about participants being overwhelmed by a repeated formal check for their continued consent to participate had been addressed, the continued opportunity for participants to withdraw from the study or to voice their concerns provided an ongoing opportunity to demonstrate consent in a more informal way through discussion and participants continued engagement with the study. As discussed in Wills et al. (2016a) paper considering the use of visual methods, they had an initial

consent form that required signing but opportunities to discuss consent were taken during the following visits to participants. The consent form being more a 'procedural' element of ethical consideration and the following meetings being 'ethics in practice' (Guillemin and Gillam 2004).

In the participant information sheet, participants were made aware that if there were any concerns about their welfare during the research process or if they were upset during the study, that they would be provided with information about local support. This was not required during the study. One potential participant (who had been sent a Participant Information Sheet) wrote to state that they felt it would be too much to manage to take photographs and therefore did not want to take part in the study now that they knew more about what was involved. The individual did not communicate via email or phone, so a letter was sent by return of post reassuring them that they did not have to take part and thanking them for their initial interest. Additionally, another person who had expressed an interest in the study, showed signs of possible memory difficulties during separate conversations. This concern was confirmed when the person's partner relayed this information during a phone call following up an initial contact about the study. They were thanked for taking the time to talk about the study but that at that time there were enough participants.

In both these circumstances there was a desire to ensure that no one experienced undue anxiety, distress, or disappointment. During the Ethics Committee meeting the question about capacity to consent was raised. For this specific study it was not the aim to seek participants who may experience diagnoses leading to lack of capacity to consent (for example dementia) however, judging someone's ability to consent could have been a challenging area to 'assess'. Due to the nature of the contact prior to someone agreeing to participate this enabled further opportunity to gauge the person's abilities which was beneficial in this instance. The question of capacity can be very challenging and can raise anxieties for both researchers and Ethics Committees (Dewing 2007) and could potentially curtail studies that were seeking to engage people who experience a diagnosis such as dementia. Participants were not asked to reveal any diagnosis so there was a risk that perhaps less obvious cognitive differences could

initially have gone unnoticed. The importance of the participatory nature of the study as well as the repeated opportunities for contact and 'checking in' with participants did however provide reassurance for both parties that, had difficulties or concerns arisen, there were times where this could have been addressed either through someone withdrawing and / or through directing to appropriate support (Dewing 2007).

4.4.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

There were several different elements of personal details related to this study; names, contact details, signed consent forms, photographs and interview recordings. All participant details and interview audio recordings were held securely in encrypted databases on a password-protected computer. Any printed forms/photographs that could be identifiable were locked in a filing cabinet. Participant names were anonymised and are anonymised throughout this thesis. Data Protection Act (1998) requirements were met and maintained. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any point until the transcripts had been anonymised. Pseudonyms were given to participants and anyone else named within the interviews (e.g. a participant's husband or wife). However, there are more areas of discussion relating to anonymity and ethics specifically in relation to the use of photographs which are discussed in detail in the following section.

4.4.3 Ethical use of Photographs

One of the most potentially ethically challenging aspects of the study was the use of photographs. Photographs can capture images that may be identifiable to others, for example, faces, rooms, houses and objects within someone's environment. Warr et al. (2016) quote Bourdieu's reflections on the challenges of social research in a broader context than photo-elicitation;

> "…How can we not feel anxious about making private worlds public…(Bourdieu 1999)…" (Warr et al. 2016, p. 2)

As Warr et al. (2016) go on to discuss, the use of research methods that have a photographic element have an even stronger potential to make people's '…private

worlds public…' (Warr et al. 2016, p.2) therefore this can raise increased ethical concerns for the researcher and ethics committees who must approve proposed research studies.

One cause of increased ethical concerns is that it is not possible to promise complete anonymity for the reasons stated above; someone seeing an image may recognise something captured within the photograph and subsequently identify that the image is associated with an individual (Clark et al. 2010; Wiles et al. 2012). It is essential that this is discussed openly with participants so that they are fully aware of the risks and can consent to participate with the clear knowledge that there is a chance that they may be identified (Wiles et al. 2012).

Whilst total anonymity is not possible, there are actions that can be taken to mitigate the risks of individuals being identified (Wiles et al. 2012). Wiles et al. (2012) discuss how, for some studies, the people in images need to be seen, anonymising them would detract from the point of those research (an example given is where identity is a focus of the research). However, in this study, there was no need for people to be 'seen'. If an image was going to capture other people (for example taking a photograph of a family meal) participants were asked that they let the people know why the photograph was being taken. They were then asked to seek verbal consent from those in the photograph. It would not be possible to ask them to complete individual consent forms for each occasion where other people may appear (Clark et al. 2010). Participants were then asked to reassure people that any faces in images used for dissemination of research would be pixelated thus obscuring the image and rendering them less likely to be recognised. Where possible images without people's faces were encouraged (e.g., hands may appear in a shared meal image) and ultimately, when considering use of photographs for research dissemination the question would need to be asked as to whether it was necessary to use any images where people's faces would be included even if pixelated.

Whilst the people appearing in the images should have agreed verbally to have their photograph taken and should have been aware it was for a research study, they will

not necessarily have known the details of the study or how the image may then be used in dissemination of research (Clark et al. 2010; Clark 2013). Clark (2013) discusses his own hesitancy about using images showing people as, whilst there is the expectation that they will have been asked their permission to appear in the image, there is still a question as to whether this happened and whether they fully understood the implications of being in the image and where that image may be used in the future. The result is that Clark (2013) reports he felt at ease with using these images as part of data analysis but not for dissemination. In some situations, where a photograph is being taken in a crowded or busy public place (for example a high street full of shoppers), it can be acceptable to permit the photograph to be used with a wider audience without obscuring each individual facial image (Bugos et al. 2014) though this can still raise ethical concern (Clark et al. 2010). Whilst some Ethics Committees will require written permission to be gained from anyone appearing in a photograph (Bugos et al. 2014) the Bournemouth University Ethics Committee were satisfied with the proposed approaches of minimising images with people's faces and pixelization of faces where necessary and very careful consideration of the use of images in future dissemination of research.

Another way in which participants were able to have some control over their images was to ask them if there were any that they would not want to have reproduced as part of dissemination of work from the study (Clark 2013). No participants in this study asked for any of their images to be excluded. However, if anyone had identified photographs they wished to remain private, the images would have been marked to ensure they did not appear in any research dissemination. This collaborative approach to managing the photographic data is in line with the nature of participant-driven photo-elicitation where the participants are in control of many aspects of the study (Pink 2021) therefore requiring them to inform people what the photographs are for is part of this 'joint effort'. It was also another way in which participants could gain a sense of reassurance in terms of the different ways in which they could lessen chances of identifying photographs being used for dissemination of research should they have concerns. This in turn could enable a greater sense of freedom when taking images,

knowing that they would be reviewed and not used further than the interview stage if they did not wish them to be.

Whilst the collaborative research approach was very much at the heart of the use of participant-driven photo-elicitation it must be acknowledged that there was still a point at which the ownership of the photographs needed to be requested by the researcher so that they could be used for future dissemination of findings. Participants had been made aware of this from the start of their agreement to participate. A separate Photograph Release Form (Appendix J) was developed which they were asked to sign once they had reviewed it and only if they felt satisfied with the form's content. Participants could have decided not to release their photographs to the researcher which would have meant those images could not be used in any research dissemination however in this study all participants signed the release form. This enabled the images created to then be used in publications resulting from the research.

Ownership of the images is an area of discussion raised by Wiles et al. (2012) but not in a legal sense but that individuals have taken time to compose the image and have put their own intentions into it. This in turn can raise question about the ethics of altering images (e.g.: pixelating faces) from the perspective that the researcher is then putting their own mark on someone else's work (Wiles et al. 2012). The images generated in this study were to support discussion at the interview stage as opposed to being a piece of work that would be analysed. Participants were informed from the start of the study about the process of the Release Form and the proposed pixelation of images where necessary. It is something however that would need to be considered for future research were the images themselves being used for content analysis for example and being prepared for participants to not want to 'hand over' their work to the researcher or not agree for images to be altered in any way.

Already some images have been used for seminar presentations and Public Engagement in Research events. A novel way to talk about the research at a conference (recipe card), a folding business card for a national public engagement

event called Pint of Science and a submission to a Photographic Representations of Research competition which was open to both members of the public and the University (Appendix H). Images are still selected carefully for these events being always mindful of any potentially recognisable features and acknowledgement fully made that the images were taken by participants. For pragmatic reasons the images used for these two events were submitted by the researcher with acknowledgement of the fact that participants took the photographs. There could however be opportunities for cocreation using imagery in the future.

Despite the initial concerns that the study could be ethically more challenging due to the use of photographs, it was comparatively straightforward, strengthening the thought that this was the right method of data collection to use for this study.

4.4.4   Working in People's Homes

This research predominantly required visiting participants in their own homes which raised lone working safety considerations, the safety of the researcher needed to be considered alongside maintaining participant anonymity. How to manage this appropriately appeared to be less obvious in information about research processes and procedures yet an important consideration (Pink 2021).

An awareness of lone working policies from the researcher's previous experiences working with vulnerable people in the community in social care practice created a heightened awareness of potential risks. In this scenario the risk was not felt from the participants themselves, but it cannot be predicted who else may be present or may visit someone's home whilst a research meeting is taking place. Prior experience of being in situations of elevated risk whilst working alone in the community made this an area that was raised with the Ethics Committee considering a lack of clear guidance for researchers. This was an occasion where the 'researcher – occupational therapy practitioner' roles felt 'blurred' to some extent, something which became apparent at different points of the study (see Section 4.7.1 Personal Reflection for more exploration of this aspect). The Ethics Committee agreed that the researcher could give a university colleague a sealed envelope containing details of the participant

address when an interview was taking place. If the researcher had not returned by a specific time and was not contactable via phone the person holding the envelope would be able to open it to locate the researcher.

Participants may also have felt at risk by having a relative stranger entering their home, therefore alternative meeting places were always provided as an option. One participant chose to meet at a local café initially and then at the University. This was not for concerns of safety but for concerns that their home environment was not as tidy as they would have wanted if they were having visitors. Another person opted for the initial meeting to be at the gym cafe, which is where they first saw the study flyer, a place of convenience. Thereafter, they chose to meet at their home. Another participant was first met at an Age UK venue where they volunteered. A meeting room was provided and subsequently the participant chose to meet in their own home. There was a sense of caution and safety for both researcher and participant in these initial meetings which provided reassurance for both.

4.4.5   Reflexivity and Ethics

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) discuss research ethics dividing it into 'Procedural Ethics' and 'Ethics in Practice'. The former being the processes researchers will go through with ethics committees and forms and paperwork, the latter being the things that arise as the research progresses. They also acknowledge that professional groups will also often have their own ethical practice documents but that these are usually less directly relevant to research ethics (being more clinically focussed) but can mean that health and social care professionals may feel more familiar with ethical principles in relation to working with people (Crow et al. 2006). This is true of Occupational Therapy where there are the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) (Professional Body) 'Professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics' (RCOT 2021) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (Regulatory Body) 'Standards of Performance, Conduct and Ethics' (HCPC 2016).

Professional and Regulatory body guidance both provide a foundation for proceeding in an ethical manner and are embedded in all aspects of clinical practice. It can

however also add to the challenge of thinking with a more 'research focus', dividing attention and adding to the raised anxiety about qualitative research. Delving into people's lives, asking them to reveal elements of themselves to explore a topic that is of interest to the researcher, rather than asking questions about an individual's health and wellbeing to provide an intervention, can feel very different for a practitioner turned researcher (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). The research may lead to future change for a wider population, but it can feel initially, at an individual researcher level, a selfish process, exploiting someone's agreement to participate to unpick a question that is of more interest to the researcher than it is to the participant. Research ultimately is to have a wider impact than individual cases, but this can be incongruent with a practitioner-researcher's previous clinical roles and Guillemin and Gillam (2004) highlight that by making people actively involved in the research process can support participants to feel some ownership over the research. Participant-driven photo-elicitation is well placed to ensure this involvement, handing over the 'tool' of the study (the camera) for them to use as and when they wish.

Equally, it could be proposed that health and social care practitioners carrying out research are going to be better equipped to manage potentially challenging scenarios such as participants becoming upset or disclosing something unexpected. Challenging as this can be, it is something that has been trained for and that may well have been experienced in practice. This could mean that participants are even more protected from unethical practice and exploitation as ethical practice is ingrained from the early stages of training to be a health and social care practitioner.

4.5   Sample and Recruitment

Sampling was purposive which was aligned with the approach of seeking a small number of participants who would provide in-depth information about their experiences of food from the perspective of being older, independent people living in their own homes. To attract people to participate in the study, fliers were created that outlined the essential elements of the research (Appendix M). These fliers were placed in local settings where older people were known to visit (e.g., a local gym, resource

centre, Age UK centre) as well as carrying out a talk at a local library about the research and sending information to organisations such as a local horticultural society who circulated the flier to all their members. Local foodbanks were also contacted to ask whether they would be able to have some fliers, but they reported that they did not have many (if any) older people using their services therefore did not feel it would be something they could help with. Through these contacts being made, people interested in taking part in the study contacted the researcher via phone or email to inquire further about the research.

Basic information was confirmed at this initial contact such as the person's status as living in their own home and that they were managing their own food and that they would be able to potentially manage to use a digital camera. If these aspects were all answered positively and the person was still interested in taking part, a participant information sheet was sent to the individual and a time arranged a short while afterwards to meet in person and answer any further questions. The inclusion criteria of the study aimed to recruit community-dwelling people aged 65 years old and older (see Background, Chapter Two for the reasoning for selecting this age) who reported themselves as independent with food-related activities.

4.5.1 Informal Piloting

There was a period of informal piloting to test the feasibility of the approach prior to carrying out formal piloting. Older relatives and family friends who were not going to take part in the study (Bryman 2012) were asked initially to try taking photographs of their food and drink and anything they associated with it. It was also suggested that they take 'before and after' shots of their food. They were then asked about how they found this experience to start to get a sense of how people would respond to the task and to using the camera. This informal stage led to people reporting that they found taking the photographs straight forward so long as they remembered to take the images but that they did not particularly feel that taking 'before and after' photographs were adding anything to the experience. Reflecting on this and looking at the photographs taken it was agreed that this seemed a needless instruction, it was

not the purpose of the study to monitor how much people ate so it would serve no purpose.

Exploring the use of digital cameras or other ways to capture images was an important aspect considered during this informal piloting stage. As discussed by Pink (2021), testing approaches out beforehand can highlight their appropriateness or otherwise and whilst digital cameras appeared straightforward to use, there were still many different types, and alternative ways to take photographs. Asking older people what sorts of cameras they used was helpful to gauge what might be the most appropriate camera to purchase for the study. Whilst some people reported use of mobile phones for taking pictures it was felt that this could potentially be viewed as more intrusive as photographs would have to transferred from the phone to the researcher which would either require a participant to email them all or for them to be downloaded onto a memory stick or the researcher's computer. Given that participants may well have other images on their phones, potentially interspersed between food images, this felt too much of an intrusion into someone else's personal world. Therefore, understanding people's use of digital cameras was a focus of discussion. The Sony Cybershot (Sony UK) was generally deemed to be a straightforward digital camera to use with a 'point and shoot' approach being reported as easy.

4.5.2   Formal Piloting

The first participant in the study was viewed as a pilot study. Having a pilot study allows any problems in the process to be uncovered, enabling the process to be adjusted as necessary to ensure it is as robust as possible moving forward (Petre and Rugg 2010). Having the opportunity to 'test' the practical process of a participant using the camera and then being interviewed with photographs was valuable both for checking that the process was straightforward for the participant (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002) but also for researcher confidence in the study.

It cannot be assumed that because a pilot study has been successful that the remainder of the study will go smoothly (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002) after all, the study involved people and each person may respond differently to the study and the

tasks involved. The decision then needs to be made as to whether to include the pilot study in the main body of work (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002). In qualitative research it is not uncommon for a pilot to be included in the work and in this case the pilot participant's interview was included as there were no significant issues raised. The only point raised was the discussion about how long someone could take photographs for, and the pilot participant was given longer if she wished to have more time (see section 4.3.1). Had there been significant issues following the first participant's experience with the study then a second pilot would have been required and the interviews potentially not included if the study had changed significantly.

4.5.3   Sample Size

In total ten people took part in this research study. A small sample size is common when the aim is to get depth of response and to be able to analyse the scripts in detail (Pickin et al. 2011; Smith 2011). Smith et al. (2009) suggest that there is more likely to be a problem with too large a sample size than too small a sample for interpretive phenomenological studies. If there is too large a sample, there is a risk of the depth of analysis being impacted. Data saturation is the term often used when judging when to stop gathering data, a point at which it is deemed there is nothing new emerging. Van Manen (2016) argues that whilst data saturation may be something possible to identify in some qualitative studies, it is not an appropriate technique in phenomenology.

> "The idea that you keep looking until you have saturated your material….does not make sense because there is no saturation point with respect to phenomenological meaning. In phenomenological inquiry, you open up a question, which, becomes bottomless – so it does not make sense to say that you caught all the meaning or meaningfulness of a human phenomenon." Van Manen (2016, p.5)

It was deemed that there had been a good depth of data gained from the ten participants interviewed but it was not claimed that saturation was met. Therefore, there were no new participants recruited after the tenth person as there was a wealth of in-depth data to study at this point.

4.6   Transcribing Interviews

It is recognised that the usual process for audio recordings of interviews would be for the researcher to carry out the transcription of the interviews. This is said to enable the researcher to be fully immersed in the data throughout every moment of the study (Halcomb et al. 2006; Johnson 2011). However, it was decided to employ an external agency to carry out the initial transcription leaving the researcher more time to go through the transcriptions in detail whilst listening to the audio recordings to correct errors. The transcription company had been used and recommended by researchers within the University and the company details were read thoroughly to ensure that they adhered to General Data Protection Regulations (2016).

Working full time in Higher Education whilst carrying out PhD research can mean that time is at a premium to study (Moriarty et al. 2015). Therefore, spending a considerable amount of time typing transcripts when not being able to touch type can be arduous (Johnson 2011) and can result in more focus on trying to type rather than the actual content of participants interviews. Employing someone for the initial transcribing is not without precedence within qualitative research where time is more limited (Halcomb et al. 2006; Johnson 2011; Moriarty et al. 2015; Vindrola-Padros and Johnson 2020) and it did not mean that it was not possible to be immersed in the data. Employing a transcription service freed the researcher to use valuable time working through transcripts along with the audio recordings to ensure accuracy and to become immersed with the content of the interviews and really 'hear' the participant's voice. The level of detail within the transcripts in terms of how participants spoke, the basic 'ums and errs' were recorded but not every nuanced detail, as this study was not using narrative or discourse analysis and therefore did not require this level of detail. The elements that were thus not included did not detract from being able to engage in participant worlds in depth.

Tilley (2003) raises the valuable point that someone transcribing work will be making their interpretations of how to show participant words on paper therefore it is important to consider how this could influence transcripts. By working through the

transcripts with the audio recordings enabled a detailed immersion in the content and initial considerations and interpretations to be made by the researcher rather than the transcriber having an influence (Tilley 2003).

4.7   Reflexivity

Within interpretive phenomenology, there is a discussion about the need to understand personal views and understandings to identify these so that they, as much as possible, do not influence the interpretations made about other people's experiences (Finlay 2011; Guest 2016). It is acknowledged that it can be challenging to remove personal thoughts and feelings from interpretation, but reflexivity is an important part of the process of trying to understand someone else's experiences (Mason 2002; Guest 2016). It is not possible to entirely see the subject purely from the participant's stance as thoughts and feelings are personal but reflecting on the influences on the interpretations of other's experiences is important. (Clancy 2013; Tinkler 2013). Guest (2016) suggests that it is not a case of being able to remove personal influence entirely, but reflexivity is about a self-criticality that illuminates personal views and feelings and acknowledges how they may have influenced the research process from design to the discussion.

This research is a topic that has connections both with the previous emotive work situations as an occupational therapist (OT) as well as personal experiences of food being important within the family. Thoughts and feelings from these experiences could influence the interpretation of participant data, therefore, a constant review, questioning and reflection on the interpretations being made were important to strive for emerging themes and theories to be as uninfluenced as possible. The following section will be written in the first person as it is a reflection on personal viewpoints.

4.7.1   Personal Reflection

Using a reflexive approach means that as the researcher I needed to be aware of my values and beliefs and how my life experiences have shaped my interpretation and

views of the world (Mason 2002; Finlay 2011; Tinkler 2013; Clancy 2013). I believed that my background as an OT would help me with this reflection, though I was not complacent. The RCOT 'Professional standards for occupational therapy practice, conduct and ethics' (RCOT 2021) states that it is expected that an OT will use critical reflective thinking considering personal values, attitudes and beliefs when working in practice. I have been qualified as an OT for 24 years therefore reflective practice should be firmly embedded in my approach to working with others.

I felt that my familiarity with reflective practice and carrying out OT assessments with older people in their own homes were experiences that would be beneficial for carrying out research interviews as aspects of the scenario would not be new to me. I did not approach the research interviews thinking that it would be easy and felt much more nervous preparing for the first couple of interviews than I expected. An unexpected challenge that arose was how difficult I found it to move from the role of an OT to the role of a researcher. It was only during the interviews that I began to reflect on this in more depth and it was then something that I was overtly conscious of throughout subsequent stages of the research.

When I began to reflect on this challenge, I became aware that it had been something I had experienced from early stages of the research. It had been first mentioned by the Ethics Committee Panel. When they suggested reducing the length of the Participant Information Form, they commented that I was possibly writing it as if I were still working in practice and giving it to a client and had therefore included more information than was necessary from a researcher perspective. This was the first time that I started to become aware of the influence of my 'professional self'. This challenge of blurred roles between practitioner and researcher is something that has been recognised in previous literature to some extent (Allen 2004; Atkinson 2005; McNeil and Nolan 2011) however it was not something that had been considered prior to commencing the research.

When starting to carry out the interviews there was a familiarity to the scenario of talking to older people in their own homes. This could be considered 'insider research'

where the research is being conducted in a familiar setting (Alan 2004; McNeill and Nolan 2011). There is a risk with insider research that, due to familiarity with a setting or the culture, important data can be overlooked and that there could be bias. In the current research, whilst the setting and participant demographics were very familiar, the topic being explored was less familiar (food as a sole focus of discussion) and the use of photographs within the interview helped to create more of a sense of 'outsider research' where I was approaching the subject matter as an outsider. It was the dissonance caused by finding myself not talking to an older person about things relating to OT provision yet being in a scenario that felt very familiar that was the challenge. Alan (2004) talked about her experience of trying to separate herself from her usual clinical role when carrying out research in a familiar clinical setting, thinking about wearing different clothes to create a very obvious separation of identities and roles. This was not something I had thought about however when working in the community as an OT I did not have a uniform, therefore even my clothing for the interviews resembled what I would have worn when working as an OT in practice.

What I had not anticipated was the realisation that I felt somewhat lost initially without the familiar OT assessment script of asking people how they were getting on with various tasks around the home. The decision to use an unstructured interview approach, being guided by participants and their choice of photographs to discuss, was reasoned as appropriate given the phenomenological nature of the research. However, the lack of script from a novice researcher perspective meant that the desire to revert to typical OT assessment questions was more likely. This shook my confidence initially, however, reflecting on this situation I was glad that I had recognised the challenge early in the process so that I could prepare myself to step outside of the OT role before going into participants' homes. Remembering that I was not there to assess them for any difficulties they may be experiencing. This was in some ways quite freeing but took conscious effort to ensure that I did unintentionally start viewing things from a clinical perspective.

This OT versus researcher challenge re-emerged when I started to write about the research findings. I had a strong tendency to talk about the person, perhaps more in

the style of writing case notes rather than stepping into the more detached researcher role and focusing on the key aspect of food and how participants experienced it. I was trying to understand people's experiences of food and what it meant to them from the interpretivist epistemological perspective, I was not trying to analyse and explain people's behaviours which would be a more positivist epistemology (Bryman 2012). However, this is what I had to stop myself from doing.

Atkinson (2005) discussed her experience of trying to separate her sense of clinical responsibility for each individual she interviewed as part of an epidemiological study. The aim being to find out about how people were managing with daily tasks, the tension arising when, if they expressed difficulties with something, the researcher had to not suggest ways in which the person could overcome whatever challenge they were facing. There is a dynamic tension between duty of care as a clinician versus being a researcher and not altering results by providing an intervention in response to participants personal difficulties (Allen 2004; Atkinson 2005).

As this current research was focusing on individuals who were independent and were not receiving input from services, there were thankfully no duty of care challenges. However, one participant did start asking questions about what rehabilitation he could expect following a hip replacement he was soon to have. Whilst this did not influence the discussion about his food (he raised the question when meeting to hand over the camera not at the point of conducting the interview), it did shift the dynamics and bring me back into the space of being an OT rather than a researcher. As Atkinson (2005, p.236) states;

> "Therapists, in particular, are 'programmed' to problem solve throughout their education and working life. This humane response is endorsed by ethical guidelines: the wellbeing of participants takes priority over scientific aims of a study " Atkinson (2005, p. 236)

This was the final participant to be interviewed therefore I felt much more prepared to manage the situation so as to not interrupt the researcher and participant relationship but equally not finding myself drawn into assuming my OT role. Atkinson (2005) raises

the point that carrying out interviews has more potential to challenge the researcher versus clinical role. Anonymous surveys for example would not pose the same difficulties. Having a heightened awareness of the challenges that might arise by interviewing from a different role perspective is something that would be beneficial to raise with novice researchers whose usual role is as a clinician. This could help to circumvent any potential difficulties prior to starting interviews or in fact for any aspect of the research process.

A diary was used during the data collection period to enable reflective thoughts to be captured (Clancy 2013) and ensure it does not become an 'afterthought' (Appendix O). In addition to this, I decided to try taking photographs of food and then be interviewed by an experienced qualitative interviewer and colleague. This was done to help elicit any new insights into personal views around the role and meaning of food that could influence interpretations of participants' interviews (Jootun et al. 2009). One aspect that was always very consciously held in my mind was that I had grown up believing that my father was unusual in that he regularly cooked and had been interested in trying new foods from a young age. He was born in 1937 so was a similar age to several of the people I interviewed. I did not want this to influence my perceptions of the male participants and as I started to interview male participants, I was interested to discover that a number of them were also capable cooks even if they did not all cook every day. I then started to reframe the position my father had always had in my mind as being more unique and began to realise that this was not necessarily the case. This was an unanticipated outcome of the research and could be viewed as an example of the hermeneutic circle (Finlay 2011). This is a process whereby researchers.

> "….moving iteratively between the whole and the parts and then back again to the whole. In the first instance the researcher's previous understandings will initially colour what they access when addressing the thing itself. But this meeting between interpreter and what is being interpreted involves an ongoing dialogue where previous assumptions – now found to be partial or wrong – are revealed and challenged as new understandings are nudged into being." Finlay (2011, p.115)

Finlay (2011) recommends that people continuously reflect upon their reflections as well as the phenomena being explored, it must be a continuous process. This is something that was carried out throughout the research.

4.8 Data Analysis

4.8.1 How to analyse data

Having established that this study aims to understand the phenomena of food as experienced by older people and that data was to be collected through participant-driven photo-elicitation and in-depth interviews, the method of data analysis needed consideration. As has already been highlighted, hermeneutic phenomenology does not give a specific way to carry out research and this includes not specifying methods of analysis (Langridge 2007; Finlay 2011). Van Manen does provide some suggested steps for carrying out hermeneutic phenomenological analysis (Van Manen 1990) however these can still feel somewhat daunting for a novice researcher. Finlay (2011) reflects upon the lack of any specific structure to phenomenological research;

> "This is both bad news and good news for budding researchers! There is no template to model upon, and virtually anything goes providing the research retains its phenomenological intent and sensibility." Finlay (2011, p.115)

Having a step-by-step structure to follow when new to this area of research methodology would support development of confidence in analysing and interpreting the data. As Langdridge (2007) discusses, to explore and understand people's stories of their experiences, researchers may need the guidance of a specific system of interpretation.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was developed by Jonathon Smith in 1996 (Smith et al. 2009). As its name clearly states, this is influenced by hermeneutic phenomenology and provides a flexible and clear data analysis structure which, researchers using IPA, are encouraged to develop and make their own, as their confidence in the process increases (Smith et al. 2009; Finlay 2011). For researchers

less familiar with this method however it provides a foundation from which to work (Smith et al. 2009). IPA is a form of thematic analysis however it has a more explicit structure and process and has been used successfully with published photo-elicitation based research (Burton 2017). The challenge with IPA however was aligning it to Van Manen's (1990) approach to hermeneutic analysis.

Smith et al. (2009) describe IPA as being used to uncover people's experiences of phenomena; how they experience things in their world and how changes to their world can impact that experience. He discusses how people move through day-to-day life, not noticing small changes and occurrences. However, when something significant occurs which interrupts that person's routines it can cause them to reflect on their experiences and view things differently (Smith et al. 2009). This may, for example, be a change in role (i.e., becoming a parent) or a change in health status (i.e. illness or injury). For this reason, IPA has been most frequently seen within health and psychology research where there have been identified changes and research seeks to uncover how these alterations have impacted an individual's life. For this study, the individual's experiences were being examined not specifically because they had experienced recent significant change but to ascertain whether new understandings of their day-to-day food practices could be brought to light using deep interpretive analysis. This is in keeping with the hermeneutic phenomenological approach of uncovering new insights from embedded habits and processes.

Van Manen (2018) reviewed Jonathon Smith's development of IPA and proposed that it was not Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis but instead, should be seen as Interpretive Psychological Analysis. Van Manen (2018) gave reasons for this assertion which were refuted by Smith and then this was subsequently rebutted by Van Manen (2018). This was published in a series of articles and perhaps demonstrates the complexities and varied perspectives that have been taken when studying, developing, and working within the world of hermeneutic phenomenology. Reading these articles initially made it feel as though it would be inappropriate to use IPA when already following Van Manen's interpretations of phenomenology. However, despite Van Manen's (2018) reservations and criticism of IPA, Van Manen states;

"….despite my critical reservations, I confess that I have admiration for the inventiveness of Jonathan Smith's work. His major text, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research (Smith et al., 2009), is well written in its own terms and provides a convincing case for conducting manageable studies for novice researchers and beginning doctoral students, who are looking for an accessible guide-manual in doing qualitative study…." Van Manen (2018, p.1966)

A criticism of IPA is also outlined by Langridge (2007) highlighting how Smith stated that IPA was connected to understanding cognition and cognitive processes, however, this does not align with a phenomenological approach. Langridge (2007) does however concede that most people using IPA do not appear to be distracted by this reference to cognition and maintain a focus on understanding people's experiences. IPA has been used successfully in other studies exploring people's experiences relating to food, ageing or both and in research using photo-elicitation (Wright-St Clair et al. 2011; Pickin et al. 2011; Lachal et al. 2012; Ramalho et al. 2016; Stones and Gullifer 2016; Burton 2017). Whilst this is not of course a reason to use it, it is helpful to see its success within similar fields on inquiry. Taking time to consider the criticisms of IPA alongside the possible benefits of having a structured approach to begin the analysis of the research data, it was decided to use the principles of IPA being clear that this was as a form of thematic analysis rather than a methodology in its own right. Van Manen's (1990) guidance for hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of interview data is less structured (Van Manen 1990) however, the principles were also referred to during the process of analysis to be familiar with them and also it was observed that there were elements of similarity between the processes.

Other methods of analysis were considered before deciding on IPA, methods such as a constant comparison method. However, whilst constant comparison, as developed by Corbin and Strauss (Bryman 2012), is an inductive approach, the aim is usually to develop explanatory theories from research. Whereas phenomenology aims to understand the individual's lived experience and interpret it to uncover experiences of

the phenomenon that have been previously 'undetected' and to use rich description to develop an understanding of this (Finlay 2011). Therefore, the constant-comparative method was rejected as a data analysis method. Both discourse and narrative analysis were also reviewed to see if they would provide an appropriate route for data analysis. Discourse Analysis however does not aim to understand the participant's understanding and beliefs about the subject being discussed but seeks instead to understand how they construct accounts of what has happened to them (Chapman and Smith 2002; Smith 2011). Narrative Analysis provides a way to look at why people are telling their stories in a particular way and is more frequently seen within fields considering more challenging or sensitive topics (Gerrish and Lacey 2006; Bryman 2012). Narrative analysis considers how people have made sense of what happened to them.

4.8.2 Process of analysing the data

IPA was used to structure the detailed analysis of the transcripts. This was an inductive process following four main stages of analysis (Langridge 2007; Smith et al. 2009). The first stage of the process, as outlined by Smith et al. (2009) involved reading and re-reading participant transcripts and listening to the audio recordings alongside the transcripts. The second stage is often merged with the first according to Smith et al. (2009) and involves making comments about descriptive and linguistic elements as well as initial conceptual comments.

The descriptive comments are to summarise the key experiences or events observed in the transcripts. At this stage the aim was not to interpret the data as such but to become familiar with it and to summarise what was happening in the text (Langridge 2007; Smith et al. 2009). Smith et al. (2009) also suggests noticing any linguistic points such as metaphors used by a participant and noting these as a way in which meaning can be reflected. Conceptual comments were another level of interrogation of the transcripts, questioning what is being said and thinking about gaining further depth of understanding (Smith et al. 2009) (Appendix P). The transcript had been put into a table layout for analysis, with initial comments being made in the right-hand side of

the table and colours being used to distinguish between descriptive (pink), linguistic (blue) and conceptual comments (green).

The next stage involved reviewing the exploratory notes and starting to identify emerging themes which are founded in the participant's original comments but also the researcher's interpretation (Smith et al. 2009). This involved putting all the emerging themes into an excel spread sheet and seeing where themes were related and how they could be combined or clustered together (Appendix Q). When these themes had been developed, word documents for each theme were created and the relevant sections of transcripts for these themes were placed into the word document from each participant (Appendix R).

This initial immersion in Smith et al.'s (2009) approach to analysing transcripts gave confidence in the required interpretive process to also refer to Van Manen's (1990) approach which was not dissimilar but was less detailed to allow for more flexibility. Van Manen's (1990) three methods for approaching the analysis of transcripts; wholistic (or sententious), selective (or highlighting) and detailed (line by line). In summary the three methods involve reading and re-reading text and formulating a phrase to capture the main significance of the text (similarities with the initial stages of Smith et al. 2009), then listening or re-reading text to find;

> "...what statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described. These statements we then circle, underline or highlight." Van Manen (1990, p.93)

The last method is a more detailed approach;

> "In the detailed reading approach we look at every single sentence or sentence cluster and ask, what does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described" Van Manen (1990, p.93)

Langridge (2007) suggests that all three do not necessarily need to be used but that the first stage and then a balance of the second two stages provides the most balanced approach. Being mindful of Van Manen's (1990) three methods maintained the connection with Van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenology whilst using a degree of structure and guidance to support the process.

When this process had been completed with an individual participant this then had to be completed with subsequent participants. Once themes had been developed for each participant, patterns could be sought across the themes, seeing where perhaps differing themes specific to an individual part of a shared main theme were and thus developing a master set of themes (Appendix S Superordinate themes, subthemes example 5). It is natural that the themes developed from the first participant can influence how the next participant's script is analysed, and so on with subsequent transcripts (Langridge 2007; Smith et al. 2009). This needs to be kept in mind to ensure that it does not result in new themes, specific to an individual, being missed or dismissed. Langridge (2007) however reflects that the themes from the previous participant(s) can be used to guide the analysis of the subsequent participant(s) but being careful to amend or adjust the themes to reflect new emerging themes rather than being wedded to the original set of themes. This is after all an inductive process not deductive.

> "The process if cyclical and iterative, continually returning to the data to check meaning and confirm interpretations." Langridge (2007, p. 111)

The development of themes built on previous themes whilst being careful to adjust or add themes as new interpretations arose from different individual transcripts. Main overarching themes crossing over the different participants' transcripts, then formed the structure of the Findings Chapter (Chapter Five) (Chapman and Smith 2002; Smith et al. 2009; Willig 2013).

4.9   Credibility

The credibility of qualitative research has been debated by different authors who have identified a variety of ways to assess this, some being more aligned to methods used to assess validity and reliability in quantitative research, with others stepping away from this (Bryman 2012). For example, Lincoln and Guba moved away from the more quantitative constructs and created four main criteria to assess qualitative research against; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman 2012) whereas Yardley (2000) uses; Sensitivity to context, Commitment and Rigour, Transparency and coherence and Impact and importance.   There are further examples and, to draw these different models together to create a model with common language, Tracy (2010) identified eight key areas for reviewing the quality of qualitative research. The following table gives an overview of Tracy's (2010) eight criteria and indicates where, within this thesis, these elements are evident or, with three of the criteria, these are elaborated on the following table.

Table 7   Evidence of Credibility

Criteria	Where this is evidenced
Worthy Topic	Background – Chapter 2 details relevance of the topic Literature Review – Chapter 3 details previous work in this topic area
Rich Rigour	See below
Sincerity	Reflexivity – Chapter 4, Section 4.7 - Reflexivity
Credibility	See below
Resonance	Recommendations for Practice – Chapter 7, section 7.3
Significant Contribution	Chapter 7 – Conclusion including recommendations
Ethical	Chapter 4, Section 4.6 - Ethical considerations
Meaningful coherence	Whole thesis

4.9.1 Rich rigour

This research considered a phenomenon that was an everyday activity yet was complex and varied between participants. Data collection was not a rushed process. Initial conversations with participants allowed time for rapport to be developed and the openness of the study ensured that participants could take as many images as they desired and talk about as many or as few of the images as they wished. Participants spoke freely in the interviews and were predominantly focused on the topic being discussed for the interview. Use of photographs added detail to discussion and provided context as well as depth to the value and meaning of participants' experiences of food. This approach enabled a richness of data to be gathered. A diary was kept alongside the interviews to record initial thoughts and to facilitate reflection and reflexivity. Using IPA required a detailed and in-depth reading of each individual's transcript to elicit an ever-increasing depth of understanding and interpretation of people's experiences.

4.9.2 Credibility

Tracy (2010, p.16) outlines credibility as referring to the "…plausibility of the research findings." This is possibly one of the most challenging areas to address in Tracy's (2010) eight criteria. To increase the credibility of the study, Tracy (2010) highlights aspects such as 'thick description' should provide readers with in-depth depictions that show depth of analysis that lead to meanings that are credible within the context of the study. In this research the Findings (Chapter Five) and Discussion (Chapter Six) are where this would be predominantly situated. Credibility is something that has been striven for but is perhaps best assessed by the reader, however Tracy (2010) acknowledges that trying to provide enough detail to enable the reader to develop their own thoughts and conclusions from the work, is harder than telling the reader what to think and this has been a challenge.

Triangulation is another aspect of Tracy's (2010) credibility criteria. The notion here being that, if multiple different types of data point to the same meaning, then this can add strength to findings. However, there are also arguments against this as, ultimately, all analysis of data is being carried out by the same person therefore they could have

different findings that show the same meaning but this does not automatically mean that the finding is correct. Whilst this research was carried out by one researcher and with the interview data from ten different participants, there were similarity of some findings to those of previous researchers and theoretical literature providing a degree of triangulation and credibility. If all the findings had been dramatically different to previous studies in this topic area it could have raised questions of credibility.

Another aspect of credibility discussed by Tracy (2010) is Multivocality which related to there being different voices brought through in the study reflecting the range of responses from participants involved, respecting differences between participants and between participants and researcher. This can also include involving participants in the research findings, taking work back to them to seek their thoughts. This has not taken place within this study but were it something that would be more feasible in future studies it would certainly be considered. There are however some reservations about this within hermeneutic phenomenological studies as, once transcripts have been analysed and interpreted, findings may no longer be so recognisable to participants as it has gone through the process of interpretation by the researcher.

The credibility and quality of this current research has been something that has been strived for throughout. Some aspects of Tracy's (2010) eight criteria are more challenging to evidence and some aspects are best judged by people reading the thesis and judging whether they have been told too often what to think or whether they have been shown work that has enabled them to form their own thoughts and conclusions. Whilst some aspects have perhaps been more overtly achieved than others it was the intention to make the study as credible as possible.

4.10 Summary

This chapter has considered the epistemological, ontological, and methodological foundations for the research as well as the practical methods used to gather and analyse data. Thought has been given to aspects such as reflexivity and credibility of this qualitative research study with proposals for how this study can be trusted. Acknowledgement of where the study could have been improved has also been

considered. This will be considered further when viewing the overall limitations of the study within the Discussion Chapter.

Chapter 5   Findings

5.1   Introduction

This chapter will explore the findings from ten participant-driven photo-elicitation interviews where participants talked about the role food plays in their lives and what meaning it holds. There was richness to the participants' interviews and many themes emerged both for individuals as well as across participants. These themes were then grouped into three major themes: 'Identity', 'Belonging' and 'Environments'. Each of these major themes will be discussed, examining the subthemes from which they have been constructed. For example, subthemes such as 'Control' and 'Gender' are part of the overarching theme of 'Identity' whilst 'Belonging' encompasses people's experiences of connecting with others and connecting with their past through food. The final Major Theme of Environments is more diverse in that it considers aspects of built, natural and economic environments. Participant quotes will be used to validate the interpretations. This exploration of the Major Themes and Subthemes will demonstrate how examining people's relationships with food can throw light on different aspects of their identities and their connections with the world around them as well as being an anchor to their past.

5.2   Participant Details

The ten participants were aged between 67 and 86 years old at the time of the interviews. There were four women and six men, and all participants were living in their own homes and reported that they were independently managing their own food needs within their households. Eight of the participants were married and their husbands and wives were often referred to during discussion as people actively involved in food provision, preparation, and consumption, two participants lived alone. The different living situations are important in providing a context to participants' experiences and this will be referred to during the exploration of the themes.

A summary of the participant demographics can be seen in the table below:

Table 8   Participant Demographics

Participant pseudonym	Participant Age at time of interview	Participant living situation	Date of Interview
Ruth	76	Living alone - single	30/10/2017
Thomas	71	Living with wife	30/11/2017
Stephen	78	Living with wife	12/02/2018
Christine	67	Living with husband	22/11/2017
Frances	70	Living with wife	11/01/2018
Alice	69	Living with husband	02/02/2018
David	82	Living with wife	26/02/2018
Alistair	83	Living with wife	14/03/2018
Derek	86	Living with wife	27/03/2018
Frank	80	Living alone - Widowed	20/03/2018

Whilst participants were not specifically asked about their socio-economic status, reference to certain details during the interview can add additional context to participants' backgrounds. The additional information is summarised in Table 9. It must be acknowledged however that as participants were not directly asked to provide this information it has not been summarised into vignettes for each participant. The three main areas often used to measure socio-economic status are; occupation, income (or wealth) and education (Darin-Mattsson et al. 2017). Given that not all these details are available for participants, additional context has been given by providing area statistics in terms of population size, ethnic mix, and the percentage of population over 65 years old. The information in the following table has been collated from Local Authority (LA) Data, the names of the LAs has not been named due to maintaining participant anonymity.

Table 9   Participant demographics in more detail

Participant pseudonym	Education	Main Employment Mentioned	Indicators of income / wealth (including home ownership)	Living Situation	Population of district / ward / town / village	Ethnicity (WB = white British)	% 65+
Ruth	University	Education	Small flat	Suburban district	16,871	90% WB	20%
Thomas	University	Business / Overseas work	Large, detached house (owned)	Suburban district	11,521	91% WB	20%
Stephen		White collar / Industry	House (owned)	Suburban district	16,871	90% WB	20%
Christine		Administration NHS	House – was originally parents' house	Suburban district	9428	94% WB	22%
Frances		Business	Detached house (owned) – wife still working	Suburban district	8780	96% WB	24%
Alice		Nursing	Detached house (owned)	Rural town	8985	93% WB	23.8%
David	Secondary level	Farm labourer then moved to industry	Detached house (owned)	Village	1266	97.7% WB	32.7%
Alistair	University	Overseas Business	Detached house (owned)	Village	4518 (ward pop.)	95.9% WB	26.7%
Derek	University	Overseas Business / Farm management UK	Detached house (owned)	Town	53,046	95.2% WB	27.5%
Frank		Farm Labourer	Rented cottage	Hamlet	428	93.3%	20.6%

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5.3 Major Theme 1: Identity

Participants reflected and revealed aspects of their identity when they talked about the different ways in which they made choices about food and controlled different occupations relating to food. Their values and beliefs were evident through reference to self-control when faced with foods perceived to be indulgent or through reference to guilt for consuming certain foods. Values and beliefs were also apparent through food purchasing and views expressed about other people's food choices. Participants took different roles relating to food and routines were varied. All these differences highlighted how many different, nuanced ways food can be part of someone's identity in everyday life.

5.3.1 Control and choice – from provenance to purchasing to preparation

Participants discussed ways in which they were in control of the food choices they made, from provenance to purchasing, to preparation to eating the food, participants talked about all the different ways in which they had made choices and exerted control. For several of the participants their control over the food they ate and the choices available to them changed due to health or age-related changes either temporarily or as a permanent change.

For eight participants the provenance of their food was an important aspect that they wanted to have control over; knowing where their food came from and being able to make choices based on this knowledge was something that they valued and held as important. For six participants this could mean growing some of their own food, enjoying fresh ingredients straight from the garden. This was seen to varying degrees of commitment, with Stephen, Frances and Frank referring to times past where they had grown a small number of fruit or vegetables, runner beans and tomatoes for example. It was spoken of as something they had enjoyed more as a hobby, with varying success. Something they derived pleasure from through the process of growing as much as eating the produce. However, for Derek, Alistair, and Alice this was something they did every year, eating fresh from the garden or allotment during the growing season and freezing things to have in the winter months. Derek was the most

driven to grow much of his own produce and this was a role central to his identity. He was a gardener and a producer; this gave him a way to control much of the fruit and vegetables that he and his wife consumed. During the interview there was a guided tour of an extensive garden with fruit bushes and trees, and areas ready for planting summer salad and vegetables. The contents of the freezer was displayed with equal enthusiasm, revealing various home grown produce kept for use during the winter months. At 86 years old, having two artificial hips, he was not stopped in his drive to produce food;

> "Apple sauce from our apples…drain off the juice which we drink and then bag up the rest...tomatoes...peppers… Spring greens...rhubarb…gooseberries…look at that parsnip...harvested a couple of days ago...beetroot. Which is excellent...it's nice to produce your own. 'Cause everything …you buy has got additives. Whereas if you've got.... a garden like this, you know, use it." Derek

Another way in which Frances and Alice exerted control over the provenance of their food was through considering the welfare of farmed animals. Frances referred to buying what she called "happy meat". This was meat that had a clear, traceable history which provided the story of the animal from farm to plate. This ethically led purchasing was a strongly held value, formed through different food experiences and established over many years and something that she was willing to make certain compromises for in order to ensure the meat she and her wife ate met her ethical standards;

> "…I used to like frog's legs until I realised how they were farmed…same thing with veal …I'd rather pay a lot of money and have just a small amount of a really good quality piece of meat that I know the provenance…it's had a good life and it's been kindly killed. …we both came to the conclusion… we're eating happy meat…" Frances

Figure 3 Alice's eggs from a friend's daughter's chickens

Alongside ethical choices guiding what food to buy, there was also consideration given about where the food was bought from. Alice, David, Frank and Frances talked about wanting to buy food from local shops and producers, giving them a sense of contributing to and supporting the local community;

"... and we use the village shop as much as we can buying eggs and things like that… so just to keep the shop running we wanted to encourage them so that's why we buy them over there and Freda likes to sort of buy a few different things, like mushrooms something like that from there." David

Purchasing locally was also important for their local and national identity as well as meaning that they could buy food that met their standards of flavour and quality;

"……when we start getting local salad stuff, but this stuff that they bring in from Spain and that's foreign, it's tasteless. I mean, an iceberg lettuce, whoever invented those things should be hung….basically, as long as it's [food] British, I'm not too concerned…there's a deli in the arcade in town. And he gets his tomatoes from somebody on the Isle of White. And I tell you what, they are brilliant. They are proper…I mean I know it sounds silly, but to me a tomato has got to smell like a tomato. But some of these Spanish and Portuguese or

whatever, well a majority of them aren't even ripe because they pick them when they're still green…." Frank

Thomas talked of being able to buy fresh food directly from the source, an opportunity afforded by being able to walk to the seashore with his wife and buy fish straight from the fisherman and eat it that night. The provenance of the food directly visible, the freshness unquestioned and the connection with the local area tangible;

> "We found a guy…well, there's two... Both of them have got boats and they go out fishing and then they sell the fish. We got some fish. Molly got some mullet there today and she's spicing that up and frying it for tonight…." Thomas

Eight of the participants expressed elements of control and choice that were important to them in relation to quality, provenance (either in terms of local purchasing or ethical farming) and freshness of their food, reflecting values, beliefs and priorities. However, for Ruth fresh food was valued but as she no longer cooked for herself she was not making the same purchasing and sourcing decisions as the other eight participants. Christine was the only participant who really did not appear interested in where her food came from or the quality of the food. Christine was open throughout the interview about her disinterest in most aspects of food including buying it;

> "…I hate… food shopping…I look at it and I think…what do I get, I don't know? There's this great shop full of stuff and then I…go a bit dizzy... So I go with a list and I think, right, well, as long as I've got those things on it…then I'm all right…" Christine

Whilst Christine would much prefer not to do food shopping, everyone referred to supermarket shopping as one of their main places to buy food. However, for Frances, Thomas, Alice and Derek, who had already highlighted their desire for quality produce, supermarket shopping was purposeful in terms of sourcing specific items from specific stores both for quality and also for cost, another way to of exerting choice and control over food;

> "...we're fortunate from here that....you can go to Marks & Spencer's, Tesco's, LIDL, Waitrose.... So, depending on what we're getting, depends which supermarket. My wife likes fruit from M & S and H [*local shop*]. Sometimes the veggies are good from Lidl... we go to Waitrose quite a lot. The other place that we shop at is Bargain House ....and that's a lot cheaper..... We only buy branded stuff there....The taste and the quality is important....." Thomas

For Alice and Frances supermarket shopping was additionally described as a place of exploration about the choice of different food opportunities they could discover;

> " ....Waitrose I love shopping in Waitrose. I like the actual experience of shopping in Waitrose... but I go to Waitrose to be tempted by other nice things they have there anyway...if I go down to Lidl because you know they have these sort of national weeks and things... so I will go there on a Spanish week or a Greek week or Italian whatever. Looking specifically for things that are interesting..." Frances

As well as choosing where to buy food, participants also talked about what to buy. There were varying references to the wish or need to have some control over the content of the food being bought from shops. Stephen, Frances, Ruth and David discussed their feelings that ready prepared foods would need carefully selecting to check the ingredients as there was a feeling that these items were more likely to contain additives. Frances and David spoke of preferring to continue cooking fresh food but that ready prepared meals, or ready prepared elements of a meal (eg: sauces, pizzas that would be added to at home) may be helpful in certain circumstances and either already used them sometimes or would accept them if that was the way they were going to get food. Alice and Christine did not reference ready meals specifically and had very different approaches to food; Alice loved all aspects of food and food work whereas Christine was disinterested. Their lack of reference to ready meals could be interpreted for Alice as something that did not particularly feature in her life as she was an active and engaged cook and for Christine, she ate what was available and required the least effort.

Stephen, Frances, Ruth and David discussed the need to think about the contents of ready prepared food, this did not preclude them from buying them when the need arose. Frances found this was a useful way to have food easily prepared on the first night of a holiday for example. There was still effort however put into sourcing ready meals that were deemed to meet the necessary and desired standards, purposeful purchasing from specific supermarkets was discussed. Considering where to buy ready meals and researching the contents was something reflected by the other three as well;

> "…watch what's on the ingredients because otherwise you'd find you're eating a lot of chemicals...rather than decent stuff. But I mean there are ready meals and stuff out there that's reasonable. Perhaps have to do a bit of online research and find out which was the best deal…" Stephen

Figure 4 Frances' ready-to-cook meal

Everyone reflected the wide range of different choices that were made every day in relation to where to get food and what sort of food to get. All these different choices were opportunities to control what was going to be consumed. These choices also reflecting their judgements about quality, what they valued, their attitudes, beliefs, and priorities.

5.3.2 Control and Choice - What and when to eat

Once food had been selected and purchased the next step considered here is deciding what to eat and when to eat it. Participants expressed different degrees of choice and control over what they ate each day. The wives of Alistair, Stephen and Thomas predominantly prepared and cooked their meals and for Christine it was her husband who had this role. All of them still had some choices and expressed preferences for certain foods but they appeared to not have any strong desire to influence the meals further or to exert any stronger control over what they ate with Christine having the least input and eating whatever her husband decided to 'invent'.

Figure 5 Christine's Husband's 'Inventions'

The level of involvement in food purchasing by Alistair, Stephen, Thomas was more in the role of supporting their wives with some input in terms of the quality of the foods purchased, or, in the case of Christine, the desire to leave all food related tasks to her husband whenever possible. As well as expressing food preferences Thomas also had the opportunity to make food choices when planning meals with his wife for the week ahead;

"The physical cooking my wife does a whole lot. I sometimes get involved in planning it with what goes with what…I used to cook for myself. I don't do it now because my wife doesn't want me to…" Thomas

Ruth and Frank, who lived alone, discussed how the idea of cooking for just themselves, in itself, meant making different choices and decisions about what to prepare and eat. Ruth chose not to cook at home but instead to eat out for the majority of hot meals, food at home predominantly being lighter plates of food such as cheese and biscuits.

When 'eating out' food choices were based on what was available at the different places dined in and they did offer a range of meals, additionally choices could be made in other ways within these situations maintaining ways to control elements of the food experience:

"…I don't very much like, you know, a scrambled egg, don't like it soggy. So… I ask for the toast separately, so I decanted it onto the big plate…." Ruth

Figure 6 Ruth's scrambled eggs and toast

Portion sizes and not wanting to waste food when living alone also influenced or altered food choices;

> "…I think I fancy such-and-such bread today…But again, if you're on your own it…you sometimes find it hard to get through a loaf and then it starts to either go off or you don't fancy it anymore. Which is a bit of a waste if that's what you're going to do…" Ruth

Alice, Frances and Derek were fully in control of what was cooked and consumed, and David very much worked in partnership with his wife. These individuals had also been the participants most actively involved in thinking about the provenance and purchasing of their food. They expressed a range of ways in which they exerted their preferences for the foods they ate including foods that they felt were perhaps different to what other people might enjoy or how other people might consume their food. For example, Derek described himself as liking '*odd things*' such as pickled walnuts and avocados and Frances had a very specific way she preferred to have her porridge;

> "…I love porridge. It has to be made with half milk…I always have to add a little pinch of Maldon salt, but I also particularly like it with cream on top…I have maple syrup on it…and then if I haven't got any actual cream in I keep a tin of the squirty stuff in. Because you can go (noise made) like a mountain on top of it…" Frances

Figure 7 Frances' porridge with squirty cream

These participants continued to eat the foods they preferred even when someone else in the household may not enjoy the same foods or prepared foods in different ways. Being able to keep eating the foods they enjoyed despite what other people may think, was important to them. Frances, Derek and Alice particularly took the lead within their households for food purchasing as well as being the main cooks. They all ensured their preferences were met.

As well as discussing their own preferences, Frank, Ruth, Frances, and Stephen also expressed differing views about other people's food choices. Whilst personal preferences were seen as an important aspect of who they were, views on other people's food preferences could be viewed as being 'fussy' or 'picky'. Frank and Frances particularly expressed a strong sense that people should eat what they were given, and they therefore should be grateful for this, whether this matched their own approach to food or not.

"…that's what irritates me about my grandchildren….They pick and mess about with their food. And no matter how much effort is made, they don't seem to…I mean, my eldest grandson, he eats sausage with sausage with sausage and anything, but sausage, but trying to get him to eat a piece of…a piece of crispy

bacon or something like that, "..don't like that" [imitates grandchild's voice]."
Frank

Frances went further when discussing 'fussy eaters' and included people with food intolerances. Food was a central part of Frances' identity and there was a sense of wanting everyone to enjoy food as much as she did but also of knowing better and of wanting to control other people's foods;

> "…One of them supposedly had a gluten intolerance and afterwards we found out she didn't. A lot of these intolerances we tend to think are… more an allergy about not being noticed. A lot of allergies these days are not allergies.…Okay you don't like something. I remember one of them…she came around unexpectedly one day …we were having gazpacho… and said do you want to join? "Yes, yes that looks lovely". And so she sat there and she was…and halfway through Annie sort of looked at me and said "it's got bread in it". And so we were sort of watching to see… but there was nothing wrong with her. Absolutely nothing wrong. " Frances

Ruth and Stephen also discussed people with food intolerances or allergies but from the perspective of being grateful not to experience these challenges. Both enjoyed food and took an interest in what they ate however it was not such a strong part of their identities as for others such as Frances;

> "I'm always just very thankful that I haven't got any major allergies. Because I've got friends who are allergic to onions - how terrible… Or it's got to be gluten-free or I've got a friend who's now got to be dairy-free as well as gluten-free.…I think that's a great restriction on your food. So I'm very thankful I don't feel restricted in that way. …I know where I went to Waitrose … have lovely gluten-free…goodies. So I got some things for her…. this was calling on my friend who made me a cup of coffee and…she said you can have a 'human biscuit'… meaning not gluten-free." Ruth

Ruth and Stephen enjoyed having control and choice over their food however there did not appear to be any desire to control what other people ate with regards to

allergies and intolerances. Whilst there appears to be respect for people's health related food differences and preferences, Stephen did talk about trying to change his sister-in-law's food preferences to be more in line with his own;

"I like plenty of sauce or gravy with whatever I'm having…..but funnily enough, my wife's sister...she's completely anti-gravy and she'll only have a splash, you know? And then we have to convince her it's sauce. It's not really gravy. *Laughter*" Stephen

This desire for other people to enjoy food in the same way, or as much as the person providing it, led Alice and Frances to talk about taking time to research recipes and alternative foods to enable vegetarian friends to enjoy a meal occasion as much as non-vegetarians. They were both people who identified as 'foodies' though only Frances had expressed disapproving views about people she deemed to be fussy eaters. However, cooking for vegetarian friends was a food preference that was not questioned but was however actively accommodated, giving an opportunity to try new recipes and show knowledge, skill and ability in cooking;

"… we had …a veggie friend who came and stayed for the weekend…It was…it's a Yotam Ottolenghi recipe…I mean, we're not vegetarian, but good vegetarian food is as good as anything. It just takes a lot more prep usually …I collect this sort of weekend papers and things. If I see a nice looking recipe I go 'oh, okay', so I stick that in the book… And I thought saffron custard? I like the sound of that. So I did that when a veggie friend came to stay as well." Frances

Figure 8 Frances' vegetarian meal

Whilst there were participants who disapproved of fussiness as well as those expressing gratitude for not having allergies or intolerances limiting food choices, there were also two participants, Alistair and Thomas, who talked about their willingness to eat anything. They reflected on past experiences overseas (one in the armed forces and one working) and how this had led them to being grateful for being given food and would not be fussy about what they were given;

"...living in the sort of environments where we have, you have to be prepared to put up with whatever's available. ...and it conditions your...what you eat really... what my earlier life has done for me...I am not fussy. I do have some dislikes, which I've mentioned… even the things I don't like, I would eat it if it were put in front of me. ...I'd have no problem with anything." Alistair

Experiences in childhood were also cited by Frank and David as having had influence on their willingness to eat anything and everything;

"…my young days because just at the end of the war, although we were living in the country and we were able to get quite a lot of game of one sort or another, things were pretty hard. And mother only had to ever tell us once '..don't leave

anything on your plate…' and we tended to take it to heart. I would have had the pan…[laughs]..." Frank

The different choices and preferences of foods eaten by participants and their views on what other people ate, reflected a range of identities connected and displayed through food. Participants' strength of feelings about food varied and could be seen enacted through the way in which they asserted their preferences and in the way that they viewed others' food preferences, judging which were acceptable and which were not.

5.3.3   Routine

Just as participants chose what to eat, they also exerted some control and choice over when to eat. The times that they ate also gave some participants routine. Food playing a part in the structure of people's days. Routines that had changed over the years depending on work commitments, bringing up families and other such influences. Participants had however established different routines in their differing situations at the time of the interviews.

Participants created their own routines now that they no longer had to go to work, the morning routine providing an opportunity to be innovative for Frank and to also feel a degree of pleasure that he no longer had the routine of getting up for work, when asked about what role food played in his life the response was;

"Well, apart from the obvious one it's an essential. I suppose it makes me stick to a bit of a routine. I must admit breakfast is getting late these cold mornings. Yeah, it gives me great satisfaction to hear my neighbours going out to work… I don't have to come downstairs to make me coffee now. We had a little travelling kettle and I managed to find it, fill it up at night. A spot of milk, put the milk on the windowsill, it's the same as putting it in the fridge. Make a mug of coffee and get back under the blankets…" Frank

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A new routine and some small changes to the environment enabling the morning routine to be more enjoyable. For Stephen there were several set food situations within the week; his sister-in-law coming for dinner every Saturday, his wife buying pizza on a Wednesday after she has seen her friend and Stephen taking a friend out for lunch every Monday. His week was structured, and food played a large part in this. He was not alone with such structures;

> "For breakfast, is more structured and evening meal, is more structured. Invariably, we eat the evening meal at 6:00 pm, but the lunch can vary between 12:00 and 3:00" Thomas

> "Six. Our meal times are pretty regular. Breakfast is for me half past seven to eight. Lunch is 12……dead on……especially on Wednesdays to get the Prime Minister's questions Time. And our evening meal is at six. And that's as regular as……you can make it…" Derek

Routines brought pleasure, knowing what foods were going to be eaten at different times of the day provided predictability and something to look forward to;

> "Eating breakfast, although it's just cereal I would hate not to have it you know it is…it is a bit of a ritual I suppose in a way. That you get up and you would have your cereal and I enjoy it. Milk is another…. We'd had skimmed milk for a long, long time cause I came back to have semi-skimmed on the cereal now I just enjoy it more. Having had full cream back on the farm." David

Figure 9 David getting breakfast ready

There was a familiarity and regularity with participants tending to have three meals a day in the form of breakfast, lunch and dinner, even if timings varied;

"Three meals a day. Breakfast… toast or cereal or if we're going a bit nuts bacon and egg or something. I'll always have a lunch of some sort like salad today or soup and roll or something. And then proper meal. Usually just a main course. I might have some fruit or something afterwards. Depends how hungry we are, but quite often the fruit will be there and then I'll say oh, no. Can't be bothered. By the time we've had coffee then, but it's sort of gone past it. So…but yes. Three meals a day, definitely." Francis

Not all participants stuck to this regime however, Ruth, for example, busy being out of the house most of the day and eating main meals outside of the home, had established a different pattern to her days;

"Well, I'm busy and then I very often have my siesta, of course. And then I get going again about five or six o'clock. And then I feed the birds and the squirrels and the cat. And then I probably read the local paper and have phone calls or…So I don't get around to eating until about eight or nine at night. Which seems to suit me…quite well." Ruth

However whilst participants talked about their different routines and structures to their days, some of which had changed following retirement, for Alistair this was felt as more of a negative element of no longer working. When in employment the varying overseas workplaces meant that life was busy and different foods were eaten at different times. The change to a more settled life in retirement in the UK had brought about different routines;

> "The thing about this is repetition ...I have had the same food totally during the two weeks and two months… we have a sort of rhythm, if you like... ...that we stick to... ...because one we like it, and two it's convenient… Well, one thing was the repetition and it's a negative stimulus, if you like. And that's why I didn't photograph it….I found …the whole thing was quite interesting and quite challenging…" Alistair

Whilst some participants' food identities favoured routines and structure around food and times to eat, here the evidence of the routines was not seen so positively despite the regular foods being enjoyed and the routines being practical and convenient. Settling into a routine was perhaps seen as an indicator that roles had changed and the identity as someone working overseas and eating all sorts of foods had changed.

Routines had changed and could change depending on people's situations and they could be positive or negative depending on how the individual felt it reflected their food identity or enabled them to carry out their food identities. Food routines were important however to give structure to the day and to enable people to have control over when they chose to eat.

5.3.4   Control and Health

Health and age-related changes challenged some participants' control over their food choices and preferences. Alice and David spoke of the challenges of having dental plates;

"Oh this is dear Pearly….I decide which days I wear it or part of day and I go and take it out and if I go out… I'll have Salmon or fish, something easy to chew. I would never have a steak…It's changed the way I eat when I go out….if I eat berries and we usually have yogurt and berries at lunchtime… And I'm halfway through and I'll go…I have to sort Pearly out . It's like biting into a piece of glass, so painful.….. I'd rather not wear it." Alice

Figure 10   Alice's dental plate

Both had experienced challenges to chewing certain foods so had adapted their eating choices to work with their dental plates and still be able to enjoy foods. Alice named her dental plate 'Pearly' and Alice was someone who had a strong love of food and was enthusiastic about all elements. Food was central to her identity so having dentures was a significant challenge. For both Alice and David however the drive to still enjoy food meant that they found ways to manage and compromise, there was still a dislike of the dental plate however and it was not seen as a prosthetic device that had enabled them to return to eating everything they wanted;

"I have nothing to hold the bottom plate so it just balances…It is not easy eating an apple. Without having to chop it up, I have to chop it up now. You get over what the problems… if we have chops I like them done in the oven so that they are softer and easier to eat. And I don't use much steak now cause that's harder to eat. So if we are out we have things that are easy to eat I suppose." David

This resilience to change and adaptable nature enabled them to maintain some sense of control over their food and therefore maintaining their identities linked to food as much as possible.

Ruth, Stephen and Thomas had photographs showing different prescribed and non-prescribed medication and supplements that they took with food. The reasons for the medication varied; Type 2 Diabetes, Heart medication, pain killers for aching joints and preventative supplements.

Ruth had intentionally made sure that the tablets featured in the photograph as she felt it was an important part of her food scenes and wanted this to be reflected in the image. Whilst these tablets did not change food choices, food did still play a role in enabling the medication to be taken "…I try not to take tablets without food…" (Ruth) so meals and snacks were often accompanied by tablets that addressed different health needs. Thomas, who had Type 2 Diabetes, had needed to make changes to the food he ate and his lifestyle because of the diagnosis. The influence on food choices was described as;

> "….it's coming from two angles. One is the diabetes which has an influence and the other thing is we just like good quality food, always have done….we like to eat tasty food. We don't economize on it… to some extent, we're mindful of what we eat because of the diabetes…." Thomas

Figure 11   Stephen's tablets

Figure 12   Ruth's tablets

In a similar way to Alice and David managing changes to food choices due to using dentures, here, Thomas showed an acceptance that changes needed to be made and there was clear awareness of what foods would need to be reduced or eliminated if fully following the recommended diet for managing Type 2 Diabetes. However, to continue satisfying the desire for good quality tasty food, personal, informed choices were made about foods that were still going to be eaten though at times in

moderation. By doing this there was again a sense of remaining in control of the situation and still being able to maintain their identities as people who enjoyed good food.

For these participants the changes to their food choices were permanent however Frances and Alistair spoke of temporary health situations that had had an impact on their usual food identities. Alistair, who usually had very little to do with food preparation in his marriage, suddenly found himself having to manage whilst his wife was unwell. Frances, who usually did the majority of food tasks in her marriage, had had to hand over food tasks to her wife Annie whilst Frances recovered from surgery;

> "Annie was doing all the cooking at first when I came home and she really enjoyed it….I like being cooked for, actually….it took me a little while to get back into it…because she was doing everything including all the shopping…and then all of a sudden I found that I was able to start doing some… there we were going around Tesco's one day and she said…'if we get'…I said 'no, no, I'm going to do this'…and all of a sudden she'd realised she'd lost that bit of control. And she said 'I was quite enjoying shopping when I was doing it myself', but she said '…it's sort of gone back to how it was'. So I'm doing most of it…." Frances

There was an acceptance of help temporarily whilst in recovery but for Frances, the strong identity as someone who was in control of food and was the food expert in the house, meant that it was not long before this identity was asserted. Whilst for Frances food was a central part of her identity and relinquishing this was difficult and regaining it was swift, for Alistair, where he enjoyed food but did not do any cooking, finding himself being in control of meals was a very different experience;

> "Daisy did her back in…she was in bed…for about two months... She didn't want to eat. And I went round the different supermarkets buying ready-made meals. I didn't enjoy it, but I didn't have a problem… and I hate to think what it would be like if I was on my own. I would just buy ready-made meals…I think it would solve a problem" Alistair

As a person whose identity was as someone who was unfussy and would eat anything, this was beneficial here, as, whilst it was not a situation he enjoyed, it did at least mean that it was approached in a pragmatic problem-solving way showing another aspect of identity.

Health promotion was another way in which six participants also approached their food choices. David, Frank and Stephen were managing their weight through food and this is discussed further in the next section (see 5.3.4). Thomas and Alice used healthy food to either directly support healthy living or provide energy before going to the gym. Christine, despite having very little interest in food, did discuss healthy food. However she used her knowledge of what was deemed 'healthy food' and guidelines for specific health conditions to help her plan what foods to cook as her lack of interest in food made this a challenge;

> "…I think it's a sort of switch that you go 'oh, I haven't got any of that in there, let's have something healthy'. It's kind of automatic … also, I think since my brother who has actually got health problems and Edward who has also got health problems…they're both type II diabetic…and that's made me think even more about cutting down on sugars…" Christine

Participants were asked the hypothetical question about what they would do were they unable to get food in the way they were used to. Alistair had given this some thought and would resort to ready-meals in order to keep eating. Thomas and David, whose wives also predominantly did the cooking, had equally pragmatic approaches. They were individuals who were able to cook so considered that they would prefer to cook for themselves if that was possible but were prepared to find other solutions if necessary;

> "If I was on my own I think I would still tend to cook my own rather than [have ready meals]…but if I couldn't … you have to eat what's available wouldn't you. I don't like the idea…. it depends on the situation if you can't cook or you couldn't do it….you have to have food so you would have to have something like that and if you were at home and they are gonna bring you the food like

meals on wheels isn't it. I guess there might be difficulty getting to the shops to shop for things. It's not something I have thought a lot about because luckily, we've been a pair and able to look after each other but we do worry that there will come a time when one of us is going to be left on their own." David

Food reflecting the partnership between husband and wife, the identity as a couple preparing and cooking food together. Identities that were not so strongly wedded to cooking food from scratch meant that they would accept ready-meals as a solution but it was not the ideal, perhaps in part for the way it would be symbolising the loss or change that would have taken place within this scenario.

For Frances and Derek, whose identities were strongly bound to food, the question provoked a different reaction. For Frances, she could not imagine a situation where she would not be able to have good food, for Derek there was a very blunt response;

"That's hard. That's a...bullet [pointed two fingers to his head and mimicked firing a gun]. I mean, we're both pretty fit. Penny's 80, I'm 86. Nearly 87....we just keep fit...if we can...." Derek

However, for Frances and Derek, having control over their food, having choice and autonomy was essential. Their identities were so intertwined with all aspects of food, from growing, selecting (provenance), buying, cooking, researching, eating and feeding others, it was part of many daily actions reflecting their identities in many different ways. Rather than thinking about pragmatic ways to address the hypothetical scenario of not being able to have food in the ways that they were used to, neither could contemplate this, with one focusing on keeping healthy so that this would not be a situation that would need to be faced. How strongly someone's identity related to food appeared to reflect their response to change, whether hypothetical or real.

5.3.5   Self-Restraint, Self-Indulgence, and Guilt

Self-restraint and self-control in relation to the types of food or quantities consumed reflected another aspect of identity. Having a controlled nature and an ability to show

restraint in the face of temptation was sometimes driven by wanting to remain healthy, weight concerns or in response to how others might pass judgement.

Frank, David and Stephen all spoke of controlling food intake directly in order to control their weight and all had different ways to manage this;

"…For me personally the most important thing that I've done though is to regulate portions. I think if I…well, I know if I did carry on eating as I was, I would've been... Now I'm grizzling about, I can't keep me trousers up, I mean, I would have been I can't button me trousers up…." Frank

" …we weigh every day. We got a report that we use and so I'm watching the weight all time. And I try to keep about 12 1/2 stone…I mean it has always been drummed into you. You should keep your weight down…" David

All three men enjoyed their food however their awareness of their weight and being mindful of health advice and societal views on weight meant that they used different methods to ensure they managed portions and monitored weight. This reflects aspects of identity such as restraint and an ability to show self-discipline. Food was something to be enjoyed but in moderation. Stephen and David further reflected views and judgements of others who were overweight, possibly seeing them as people who lacked self-restraint;

"….a guy who was at our church who was grossly overweight…. I went along [*to Slimming World*] to support him... I could have done with losing a stone anyway. And he could do with losing about five. Or more, he's still going now.... And his wife went as well, because she was a bit overweight. And she's trimmed right down now. She's really looking great... I was looking online and I found out that there's a scheme with the County Council that if you meet the obese criteria, they give you 12 free weeks attending the Slimming World… they said oh, you don't qualify. And I thought no, well, no I didn't think I probably would. But I knew this chap and his wife would, and they both did. So they got 12 free weeks." Stephen

Whilst this was presented as a helpful and supportive action to take for the fellow church goer and his wife, it also reflects elements of control. Stephen had not shown judgements about people with food allergies or intolerances but had tried to change his sister-in-law's 'anti-gravy stance'. This judgement of other's food practices perhaps showing someone who judges people's food choices and consumption when it does not appear to be related to a medical or health need but more a case of being fussy or self-indulgent. Identities relating to food are complex.

However even Stephen and David acknowledged, with an almost confessional tone, that certain foods were sometimes too tempting to resist; "...I do fall over with the cakes occasionally...." (Stephen) and "Do tend to like cheese..." (David). There was a sense of guilt at weakening and giving in to the pull of foods that they were usually able to resist. Judging themselves as they would judge others.

Figure 13   Stephen not resisting cake

Ruth frequently apologised during the interview for different food items that did or did not appear in her photographs. However, unlike Frank, Stephen and David, who tried to stick to their stance of self-restraint, Ruth was consuming the foods that she felt guilty about, but this guilt did not appear to motivate her to change her food choices.

She knew what she enjoyed even if she did judge herself as not meeting personal, societal or Governmental standards;

> "I regret to say there's some red wine there in the background…. Well, I suppose I shouldn't be drinking on my own at home, but you know, I do you know have a glass of wine…" Ruth

Figure 14   Ruth commenting on the wine in this image

> "We haven't had many green vegetables so far the whole week except in watercress soup possibly. So I'm conscious that I'm not eating green vegetables and I sometimes think when are you going to have something green?" Ruth

For Frances, whose identity was so strongly connected with food, there was no sense of guilt at eating things that were acknowledged could have health implications;

> "I do have a reputation for salt…and …I do get regularly checked out. And Annie said as long as my blood pressure is still absolutely fine, then I'm allowed to continue eating salt, but I am aware that at some point …that will change. People do say that when they stop eating…stop using salt as much as they used to do they get used to it. I suppose I could…I would do… but…I like what salt does to food…" Frances

The enjoyment of good, tasty food was paramount, and this was not something she would change unless medically told to do so and even then it would be challenging. Frances what she liked and was going to continue having it for as long as she could, showing a self-assured approach which was also seen when judging people's food intolerances.

Facets of people's identities were demonstrated through the self-control shown when trying to monitor weight, the guilt expressed when continuing to consume food deemed less healthy or of not eating the recommended daily intake of vegetables and also through the continuation of eating foods that were desired regardless of health advice. Judgement of others again reflected further aspects of identity.

Considering all the themes discussed to this point; people who had strong food identities were more likely to consider the provenance of their food, potentially 'growing their own', shop purposively and highly value taste and quality of food. Cooking for others gave an opportunity to show skills and knowledge related to food however this could give a sense of being more knowledgeable that others, judging other's food identities and eating foods regardless of health advice or recommendations. Showing restraint with food reflected identities that were able to exert control over their foods though again this could move into also judging other people's possible lack of restraint. Being someone who would eat anything, being 'unfussy' was however a positive food identity both from other people's perspectives but also when needing to adapt to changing food situations. Where someone had no interest in food, the tasks associated with food were chores that were not enjoyed and there was a lack of asserting any food preferences for the ease of eating whatever was given, however, food-health guidance was useful in helping to guide food purchasing and food choices as it gave a structure to work to. The complexity of people's food identities was apparent through the mix of different approaches and opinions expressed by different participants.

5.3.6 Food for enjoyment or for fuel

Exploring what participants particularly enjoyed in relation to food revealed creative identities as well as further elements of control and an enjoyment of creating food. This was the response from Derek when asked if he enjoyed cooking;

> "Oooo Yes because... I am a practical person and it's making something. Something to control" Derek

Derek, as has already been highlighted, controlled many aspects of food within his and his wife's daily lives; growing food, cooking food and creating meals. Cooking providing another way in which to create something but also control what it contained, and this provided enjoyment and pleasure.

Alice, Frances, Frank, Stephen, and Derek all referred to different creative moments that they spoke of positively in relation to food. Alice and Frances, whose identities were strongly linked to food, talked about their love of reading cookbooks, exploring new recipes in magazines and newspapers, gathering ideas that would enable them to cook something new, there was a sense of adventure and experimenting;

> "…when we moved here I had… a whole cupboard in my room with just cookbooks, fantastic. On a Sunday April [*daughter*] still calls it ….. 'Experimental Sunday' because when they were kids I used to always say, hmm I'll keep that recipe for Sunday and try it out…" Alice
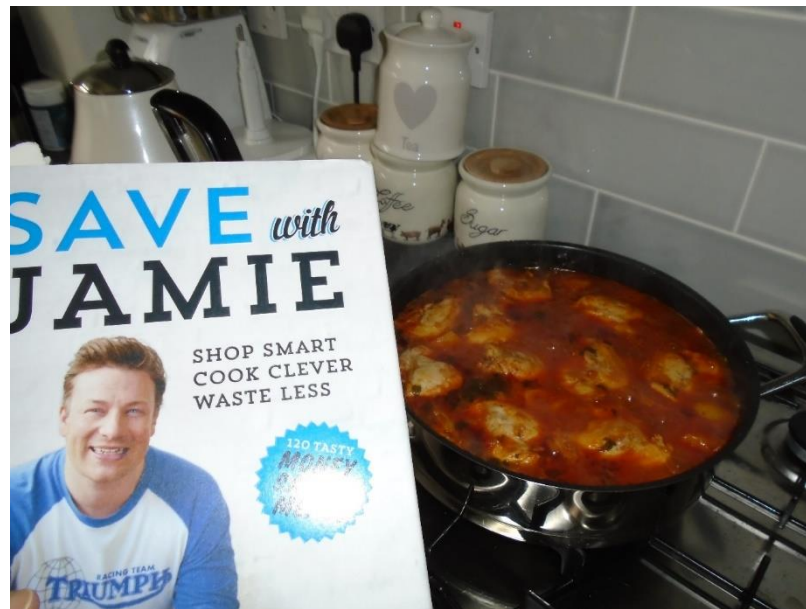
Figure 15   Alice's latest cook book

Part of the creative process for some also included food shopping, gathering more inspiration for ever expanding food possibilities and this was explored earlier (4.3.1) however in addition to this, there was also the excitement of shopping for kitchen equipment as discussed here by Alice;

> "… I love kitchen shops, any town I'm home in forget the clothes or the shoes, I'm into that kitchen shop. I just love them, really do ... Lakeland plastics …to me that's like Aladdin's cave. I just thought what've I not got or just enjoy…" Alice

Cooking for guests provides an opportunity for the skills developed in the kitchen to be presented to others. This could necessitate much planning, research, preparation and hard work creating the dish;

> "…there was one time…we were doing a Spanish meal. And we decided for a starter we were going to do tapas.…I got a book out of the library and we spent the whole day chopping and cooking. And I remember they were coming around 7 o'clock. About 5 o'clock, we both collapsed and fell asleep. We were absolutely physically exhausted and we said never again to this extent…." Frances

Stephen talked of having a 'signature dish' which was an opportunity for creativity and displaying culinary skills to others;

> "… I do a casserole, which is...which is a chicken and bacon and shallots and mushrooms and...oh, white wine. And at the end you put in 250 milliliters of cream...in. Yes. Anyway, it's not exactly low fat, low calorie. But the thing is you fry the bacon until it's really, really crisp...so it puts a bit of crunchy bits in there. Right? Yeah. And then shallots and bacon... then stick it in the oven for an hour or so… And just before you serve it up, you put the cream in. Well, I actually put the cream in the microwave and bring it up to temperature otherwise the cream cools it down quicker…" Stephen

This dish shows a range of cooking knowledge and skill, the acknowledgement of the dish not being the healthiest links with Stephen's discussions around attending Slimming World, however, here, the opportunity to occasionally cook a 'signature dish' justified the use of less healthy ingredients as it was not a frequently consumed meal and something of a special occasion.

Creativity and creating food, was not necessarily always about researching and displaying culinary skills to others. For Frank and Ruth, who lived alone, they showed different ways in which they could be creative. Frank talked with a sense of pride when he looked at his photographs of his batch cooking that he had created;

> "… that's the makings for one of my one pot wonders …it takes a few minutes to do it but it's really cost effective. Because all this tinned stuff I can get from Lidl and it's cheap as chips down there. And that's the end product bagged up ready to put in the freezer…" Frank

Figure 16   Frank's batch cooking

Not only had he been able to create several meals to go in the freezer he had been able to do it in a cost-effective way. Ruth, because she chose to eat out for the majority of her main meals and because she really did not like cooking, had fewer opportunities for her to show creativity through food itself, however she still contributed to the 'food scene' at shared meals;

> "…I don't do catering but I do tablecloths and serviettes… I try to make it fit the theme of the talk. So as I say, poppies…for World War II. And P produced the serviettes which were the poppy ones and we had some red tablecloths and some cream… and that links with food, doesn't it, in a funny sort of way?" Ruth

Figure 17   Ruth's poppy serviette and red tablecloth for Remembrance Day

When participants were asked what role food played in their lives their responses reflected the strength of their food identities;

> "… I feel really sorry for people who don't appreciate good food. And I don't understand how they can't but some people they eat food just for fuel. And they get no pleasure out of it. And I think God, how sad… it's a huge part of my life." Frances

Similarly Alice, for whom food was also central to her identity, found it difficult to understand how someone would not want to be able to cook and create foods and share that experience;

> "… she's got a grand-daughter …. and they've never made a cake together. And I'm like, jaw dropping. Shut your mouth, don't say anything. Because I'm like, what?....she's been here millions of times …. I've only once been to her house and I think she's bright enough I'm sure. And her husband made a lovely shepherd's pie that day it was really nice but she wouldn't have been in the kitchen. She left it to him. She's so frightened of cooking…. I said I'll make the cake with you. She went totally, like, paralysed with fear because she thought I was gonna pressurise her into making this cake. She's the only friend I've got that doesn't do that …" Alice

Trying to see something from someone else's viewpoint in relation to food appears to be challenging, whether it is thoughts about weight management and food consumption, food intolerances, fear of cooking, or having food at the centre of life. People's food identities can make it difficult to understand someone else's food identity, particularly where food identities are either strongly connected with all aspects of food or, at the opposite end of the spectrum.

Christine was the participant who expressed the least interest in food throughout the interview and on reviewing her photographs she frequently referred to them as '*boring*';

> "….I'm stuck in a routine.…as long as I'm not hungry I'm okay… I don't live for food whereas I think people live for food… I eat so that I can carry on the rest of my life. As opposed to doing something and thinking oh, the next meal and living for the food….[the photos] ….they're so boring….….it's the same old stuff isn't it… There's nothing else of any interest really is there….I'm stuck in a routine…. I am bound by upbringing, tradition, routine or whatever it is, all of it actually…" Christine
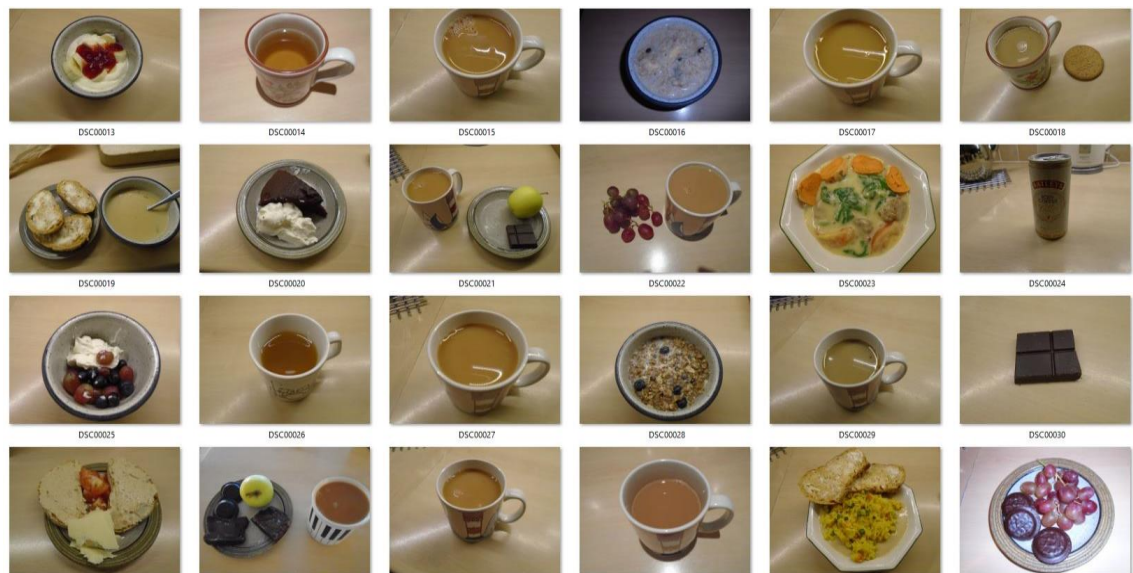

Figure 18   Some of Christine's food photographs that she felt were boring

There were small moments within the interview where Christine refers to her attempts to break with food routines or traditions, however, these attempts are usually dismissed. The example of suggesting changing the family Christmas meal resulted in

"everyone looks horrified" (Christine) at such a suggestion. As with all the participants though Christine's relationship with food is not completely straight forward. The disinterest in food did not mean that there was a lack of wanting to enjoy food moments but there was no desire to be involved with food occupations such as preparation, planning or any meals that required too much thinking. There was no desire to spend lots of time carrying out food occupations. The desire to have minimal fuss and preparation meant that there was one Christmas meal that Christine spoke of with very fond nostalgia;

> "…we were on our own for Christmas, so Edward [husband] and me and the two boys, they were quite young… and I said, right, you can have anything you like, its Christmas Day, you choose. "All right. We'll have scrambled egg on toast and fish fingers" …that was it. And I go, 'Wow!!!'…And I thought this is the best Christmas I've ever had in my whole life.…And then in the afternoon they all went upstairs, the three of them, to play with these trains and I……sat in front of the fire…with a glass of wine, probably several…and a box of chocolates and a book and that was the best afternoon…Christmas afternoon I've ever had. Alone." Christine

Whereas participants who had strong food identities took control over the food cooked and consumed, the lack of interest in food appears to lessen the drive to exert control over food situations though in Christine's example there are nevertheless still some attempts driven perhaps by the desire to simplify things and perhaps 'free up' time to enjoy other things or enjoy food in different ways. However, Christine's desire to change the usual large family Christmas gathering was not going to happen when others in her family (particularly her husband and mother-in-law) had such strong feelings about maintaining family Christmas food traditions.

Aspects of identity such as creativity, adventurousness, skills and knowledge could be displayed through cooking and creating meals. However, being someone who did not cook at all, did not mean that food itself was not still a source of pleasure and enjoyment developed over the years;

"I used to think...when I was younger, I ate to live. Now having had a place in France, I know French philosophy. They live to eat. I am somewhere ...coming down in that direction. ..." Alistair

Here the shift from working and needing 'food as fuel' is shown to change with the move into retirement and adopting a different approach to food. Stephen also wavered with regards to his approach to food as fuel or food as pleasure which, to some degree, reflected his approach to trying to manage his weight;

"...do I eat to live or do I live to eat? ...I suppose it's how I'm feeling. I mean, there's a bit of the comfort eating that goes on...I must admit… Hence the problem with the weight growing" Stephen

Eating for pleasure being synonymous with gluttony and a lack of self-control, leading to constantly striving for the middle ground, "...we have balanced meals…" (Stephen) leaves Stephen somewhat torn between pleasure and restraint.

Whether participants had strong food identities or not there was also an acknowledgement of 'useful' food, food that served a purpose and may still be pleasurable but was being used in a more functional way. Earlier reference to times where ready-meals were viewed as an acceptable way to have a meal when there was limited time or few other options is an example of food being useful. There were a number of other occasions too where food played a role in convenience, reflecting more pragmatic aspects of identity;

"… A cup –a- soup. I do tend to use a lot of that and through the bad weather. It's a good standby. I've got a little gas camping gas thing so that if I lose power, I can usually keep myself fed…" Frank

Figure 19   Frank's cuppa soup and lunch

"...that's, like, a useful Indian..." and "...banana's a convenient thing and it's a source of energy and it's really sensible fruit to eat..." Thomas

Figure 20   Thomas' convenient banana

Again, there are a complex range of ways in which food identities have been explored in relation to food as pleasure and food as fuel. Food can be a source of pleasure, but this can create challenges for people who identify as having self-control, food can be useful and convenient, a means of creating and controlling things and being creative

and adventurous and food can fuel someone to get on with other things in life that they enjoy more.

5.3.7 Food Roles

Participants talked about different roles relating to food; from being a cook, a provider of food, a consumer and the shopper. Roles varied depending on whether a participant was sharing food tasks with a partner or living alone.

Frank had previously shared food related roles with his wife but was now catering just for himself additionally he had taken on a volunteering role at a local lunch club. Whilst food was the focus for everyone attending the lunch club Frank acknowledged the club was more than just the food for him, it also offered a source of support and company;

> "…recent months, the best thing that's happened to me is that bunch of old dears at [*the local centre*]. They're a fantastic old crowd… X has been in the last three lunches… the bit I enjoyed…I've done a couple of them…is the outreach when they go and chat to the male of the family…" Frank

This was similar for Ruth too. Whilst she did not share food roles with a partner, there was a degree of role taking within shared social food situations, though much as this could mean positive opportunities it also could mean roles that were undesired;

> "… one awful period for six months, the lady who's standing up in the white top, she's called P, she and I did the catering. Well, neither of us really were cut out for it. But we were the one who's done the Food Safety Certificate. Now that I didn't enjoy it then at all, but I was responsible for the food… P and I contributed the pans... they're almost catering-sized saucepans… And I helped organise the programme, so you know, I'm got quite…quite invested in it…" Ruth

The social aspects of food will be discussed more in 4.4.1 however it is considered here from the perspective of the food-related roles that participants adopted. Food providing an opportunity to show different skills and to play a role in other people's food experiences.

The eight participants who had wives or husbands spoke of taking on different roles in relation to food within their partnership. All couples had been in their relationships for many years and had developed and shared different tasks. Where couples worked in partnership the level of food involvement was sometimes very clearly delineated with each person having specific roles and responsibilities, this enabled them to work alongside each other creating meals and knowing what was expected;

"Freda does most of the cooking…But I do like the microwave side of it. We'll do it together I use the microwave quite a lot. Every day if we do jacket potatoes, mostly…" David

Figure 21   David's baked potato

Whilst the balance of tasks may not have been an even split, it worked and David and Freda worked alongside each other effectively. There tended to be one person who took on a more dominant role within the kitchen for day-to-day cooking tasks. For four couples their husband or wife was seen as the main cook within the household. There were differing reasons as to how these roles had been developed.

For Stephen, Alistair and Thomas their wives had always taken on the task of being the main cook throughout their working lives and this had carried on into retirement. Alistair was reliant on his wife to cook as he did not have these skills, however, Thomas and Stephen were able to cook and were confident in the kitchen. As referred to earlier, Stephen showed his cooking skills occasionally making his 'signature dishes' but his wife continued to do the majority of their family meals, a role that had been clearly established in the early days of marriage;

> "I do remember once, not long after we were first married, my wife… Jane was working as well, and I was working… And I came home to Swiss roll and custard… And the second night… obviously Jane thought well, there's still some of this left…. I complained about Swiss roll and custard. I mean, we hadn't been married... Less than 12 months. Anyway and when I came home the following night, I didn't get anything. *Laughter*" Stephen

Thomas reported that he was quite capable of cooking but his wife had strong views about what men should eat and also that she should be the one doing the cooking, so he did not get significantly involved with tasks in the kitchen. This did not seem to be something that he had any difficulty with, he had some degree of input into the planning of meals and some meal suggestions and reported that he would cook for himself if his wife was unable to but for the time being they had their roles and knew what each other would do.

Having always been predominantly disinterested in food, Christine found her food role had changed to some degree following retirement. When asked if she had had the main cooking role when her family were young or whether she had shared the cooking with her husband she replied;

> "No, me… mostly I should say. Except for Christmas 'cause Edward likes to…do Christmas day 'cause he knows I'm so hopeless (laughs) and I get in a terrible state. So I do all the other bits and I help. I do what I'm told. Right, cut that up, do this, do that. And he cooks it and everyone says how wonderful he is and then he's, you know…I think he does it for that actually…" Christine

Since retirement however, whilst she did still have some roles with cooking, her husband also explored his enjoyment of cooking for everyday meals as well as

celebratory occasions. There are similarities here to the presentation of 'signature dishes'. Christine appeared relieved that her husband enjoyed experimenting in the kitchen and would eat whatever he presented her with even if sometimes she felt it was a little unusual.

Figure 22   Christine's husband's unusual creation

Frances, Derek and Alice all took on the main role of cooking as well as the majority of other food tasks within the home. These roles had to a degree been formed in the earlier days of marriage however work roles had also influenced who took on which task and this again could change following retirement;

> "…when we were on the farm… Penny did the shopping then and I've taken over the shopping for food since we have come here…" Derek

Having a strong food identity did not mean that partners did not get an opportunity to cook at all. There were perhaps specific dishes or specific roles taken on by the husband or wife in these situations, allowing them opportunities to contribute or to show their talents relating to specific dishes. This was sometimes through the food that the partner cooked or through their usefulness in the kitchen;

"… if I'm at home Larry will always do the veg. Always he will say, "I'll do it". I find swede and …butternut squash… quite hard to try and cut it all up…" and "… that is Larry's specialty. He makes the most gorgeous lasagne and barbeques… And fish curry… he's got his little sort of repertoire…" Alice

Another way in which Frances' wife had a food role was from the perspective of monitoring health;

"…I've been told that we're both going to be on a diet when she [Annie] gets back. …" and "I do have a reputation for salt…Annie said as long as my blood pressure is still absolutely fine, then I'm allowed to continue eating salt" Frances

Figure 23   Stephen's wife preparing food

With all the couples, they had either continued with well-established food roles or altered following retirement and the newfound time to spend doing more with food. Alice, Derek and Frances had roles that enabled them to maintain or even strengthen their already strong food identities. They took control of most or all aspects of food and cooking within the home. Thomas, Stephen, Christine and David were able to cook

however the degree to which they did this depended on the roles that had been developed within their marriages, how important food was to their identities and also changes that had taken place post-retirement.

5.3.8   Summary

There were many ways in which participants' identities were connected to food. Personal preferences were seen in any or all the stages involved in getting food and choosing what to eat. Control could be exerted over food and there were many different opportunities for choices to be made that could reflect personal values and beliefs. These values and beliefs could extend to making judgements of other people's food identities. People with strong food identities tended to take the most control over food choices and decisions within their households and whilst other people may have preferences, their food identities led them to be willing to eat what was available and have an 'unfussy approach'.

5.4   Major Theme 2: Belonging

The role of food in giving a sense of belonging was reflected in different ways in the interviews. People belonged to social gatherings where food was either a focus or a conduit to gathering. Food was also part of different ways that people found a sense of belonging within family groups. Cultural belonging was another aspect explored in relation to food and reflections on past experiences showed a sense of belonging in different times. These different aspects of belonging will now be discussed.

5.4.1   Social Connections

Photographs showing shared food situations with friends and acquaintances were included in most participant images, food as either the reason for gathering or as an accompanying part of the social scene. There was a sense of belonging together through sharing food or being able to provide food for others which reinforced this sense of belonging.

Meeting friends for food could range from an evening meal in a restaurant, to coffee and cake or getting together for food provided by one or more of the people meeting. Everyone referred to meeting with friends in situations involving food and several participants included photographs from shared food scenes. These images of food shared with others could be accompanied with other activities such as going for a walk or a chance to enjoy being outdoors for a shared lunch;

"… I think there were three of us, we'd met up with a friend... And it was a lovely day even though it was in the middle of winter. And we said we'll bring some soup and sure I'll pick up some bread then… And so we just sat there in the sunshine in the middle of the winter outside and had a very nice lunch. There was nobody else on the beach...it's that thing about social eating again... as much as the quality of the food, it was the fact that company was involved…" Frances

Figure 24   Frances' lunch by the sea with friends

The shared experiences of eating by the sea in the winter creating a memorable occasion, a sense of camaraderie and a collaborative spirit. The friends took responsibility for different elements of the meal, contributing and sharing both the food and the moment. Food is part of the enjoyment both in terms of consuming it but also being able to add to each other's eating experience. It meant communicating with

each other before meeting, needing to coordinate and agree who would contribute which element of food.

Another seaside shared food scene was described by Alice. Following a winter walk, enjoying hot food at the friend's beach hut which felt like a reward for their efforts. Part of the enjoyment here was about 'mucking in' and 'making do' and again both people being able to contribute to the lunch;

> "…my friends rented a beach hut just for the winter…So she took along the stew …. and I had… the left over trifle from the WI. …. we're sitting out in the sun…she only had one bowl… so I said, don't worry I'll eat out of the bowl. So there we are…What better view, you've got the sea there. It's fantastic." Alice

Figure 25   Alice's friend heating up stew in the beach hut

Here the social aspect of being able to share the food as well as sharing the moment was as important or more important than the food itself.

Participants met with friends for food in different locations and with different regularity, it could be a 'one off' or on the spur of the moment or a regular weekly event. Stephen had a routine weekly lunch with an older friend. The weekly lunch appeared to provide a sense of belonging within time and place. By taking his older friend out for a shared meal he showed how he valued his friend's company and also

gave an opportunity for him and his friend to have a more food choices as they shared costs and menu choices;

> "...this is at the Garden Centre. And this is called Hunter's Chicken…Every Monday…what we do is we share a pudding at the end...because the chap I take, he's 85 now and he's not a real big appetite... But it's always nice to have something to finish off, isn't it?...but I buy the over 60's meals....which is a main course, a dessert and a drink.... And then I share the dessert with him.... we get a good deal out of it that way..." Stephen

Figure 26   Stephen out to lunch with his friend

The shared lunch was also possibly an opportunity for having a sense of 'doing good' in supporting his friend. Stephen had already shown strong values in relation to self-restraint with eating a balanced diet and helping fellow church goers to attend Slimming World. His food identity did not stop at managing his own food needs but could be seen to extend to other people's as well.

Food could be viewed as an expression of valuing other people's company and a way to mark or celebrate opportunities to be together, whether meeting regularly or infrequently. Stephen had a regular place to go for his shared lunches and Christine talked about how she would previously have met with a couple of her good friends in a café, however illness of one of the group had meant this had not been possible. The

importance of these shared coffee catchups meant that the friends tried to re-create the café atmosphere at home, still making it a treat, honouring the importance of their friendship and of belonging together. Christine's disinterest in food did not stop her from enjoying a shared food experience and the pleasure of being in her friends' company.

"….the girl who lives here is a school friend. The other girl is her sister-in-law who was my college friend. So we've all known each other for 40, 50 years… I did only eat one piece of cake…we haven't seen each other for ages. The three of us, that is…and she's not well. So we went to her house. Normally we'd go out and we hadn't done that for ages. So I think she wanted to produce…And this coffee was delicious. Only instant…. it was beautiful… It is a treat, no one gets out their cake stands. Normally I've got a couple of them but I don't get them out…" Christine

Figure 27   Christine's cake and coffee with friends

Despite Christine not having previously expressed any interest or enthusiasm in relation to the day-to-day food at home, in this scenario she has the opportunity to share coffee and cake with friends, presented with care and attention with coffee cups and saucers and cake stands. There was no requirement for her to plan or prepare things. It was an enjoyed and valued opportunity for friends to be together and coffee and cake was part of the scene.

The symbolic value of food was something particularly highlighted by Alice, Frances and Ruth. Alice and Frances demonstrated throughout the interviews how food was very important to them and therefore sharing or gifting food was a very meaningful way for them to symbolise a sense of connecting and belonging with others as well as showing how the person and the friendship was valued;

> "….One of my ways of showing love is to give people good food… it's so much part of communication …Sitting around a table eating together. it's life, it's pleasure, ….it's friends, it's talking, it's all good things of life really, food…….." Frances

Making and giving food items as gifts was another way of connecting and valuing people, taking time to prepare and cook the items and also to ensure they were well presented as a gift;

> "It was lovely [picallili]…Really nice and I always make my little signature heart in anything I make….It's made with love… for Christmas…. I often make marmalade or something like that... But this year I gave out the piccalilli. Just friends that you see. We don't buy presents as well… So it's usually homemade… And I often look out for the little labels because you sometimes can get some really pretty ones…" Alice

Figure 28   Alice's piccalilli

Exchanges of food or food related items was another way in which food was symbolic. Giving and receiving homemade food can show people that they are valued, wanted, and cared for; that they belong and that they are worth the effort of cooking for. For both the cooks and the consumers there is an engagement; valuing others by gifting food but also valuing others by accepting;

> "….when someone's made it themselves.…I like to say someone's giving that, it's a giving and a sharing. I think I value that as well, that part of it… it sort of gives them satisfaction…" Ruth

Appreciating being given food was not only about cooked meals or baked items. Other things such as home-grown fresh fruit and vegetables or even crockery were different things talked about by Alice and Ruth as valued gifts. They all symbolised connections and interactions with people;

> "My friend gives me apples. My friend on the farm she gave me a bag in the week and we stew the apples…" Alice

"….then there's a little dish of blueberries and somebody gave me the blueberries at the…group the day before. So they were a gift… And so was the dish…the little glass dish was given to me by a very old Greek lady and they used to live in the house around the corner and we used to wave to each other. She spoke hardly any English. And so when they left to go back to Greece she insisted on giving me all her glass dishes ….the little glass dish reminds me of… this Greek lady." Ruth

Figure 29   Ruth's gifted blueberries in the dish given by a neighbour

The value placed on homemade or home-grown food made it a natural gift to make for participants who themselves valued food and a welcome gift by recipients. Food can hold strong symbolic value and can reinforce a sense of belonging. Providing food to and accepting food from others giving an opportunity for communication and interaction. It enabled people to feel needed and wanted and that they belonged with their friends and that it was a reciprocal relationship.

As well as spending time with friends, six participants talked about food and refreshments in relation to organised groups that they belonged to. Whether food was central to a group or not it could be viewed as the conduit or an enticement to meet. The nature of the groups attended by participants differed, but food was always present in some shape or form, even if just a cup of tea and a biscuit. Stephen attended a men's group which was linked to his church and described one of his photographs which showed trestle tables with a range of buffet foods:

"It was a skittles evening with food…the church decided ….the men ought to get together and get to know each other better…So that's what we did….You want to get people to an event, tell them there's free food." Stephen

Figure 30   Stephen's Men's Club's buffet

Other groups attended by participants ranged from volunteering at a local nature reserve, a book club, gardening groups or the Women's Institute. Food was observed, on more than one occasion, as a way of eliciting conversation between group participants, helping people to get to know each other or a way to have a break in the main purpose of the group;

"…. the idea is for something like the Garden Club or the book group there's the social aspect and it's while you're drinking the tea or coffee that you chat… And the one sure way of getting anyone to go to anything is to offer food. Preferably free." Ruth

Food can provide a collective experience. The men already belonged to the same church but facilitating them to get together and share food and different activities encouraged people to get to know each other better.

Ruth and Frank, who lived alone, were the only two who spoke of attending groups that were specifically formed as 'lunch clubs'. Both however spoke of the ways in which they contributed to these clubs, separating themselves from being someone who needed to attend, unlike the other people there (the '…old dears..' Frank). The lunch clubs provided a social opportunity as well as providing a choice of homemade foods. The effort that went into cooking food for people to share gave a sense of being valued and therefore of belonging;

> "…for me, it's a lovely change because I'm sitting around a table with other people and someone's laid the table up and it's a simple lunch. But it's home-made and…we're chatting around the table and so it's quite familiar because they've been doing this…I think this has been going about eight or nine years. So I feel I've got a sense of sort of fellowship with…these people…. in the summer we met every single week. Everything else shut down…But we don't shut … So there's a hubbub… of conversation is usually quite something…it's a lovely lunch and a lovely feeling…if you are a bit low when you get there… by the time you leave you might be a bit tired but it's been very…good, very sociable…" Ruth

There are many positive aspects of the Lunch Group, the company, and the camaraderie potentially as important as the food itself. Having other people to eat with was also a stimulus for eating and enjoying food when eating alone had become more difficult;

> "Two or three weeks ago I went through a phase, I didn't really want to eat. And I said I have to make myself get at it, but…recent months, the best thing that's happened to me is that bunch of old dears at the local centre. They're a fantastic old crowd." Frank

Food plays a role in fostering a sense of belonging with people and places. The use of eating in company to become interested in food again or to encourage eating was something also recognised by Alice and Frances in their roles as people who could be the providers of food for others. They spoke of times where they were aware that

providing social eating opportunities could be beneficial and give people a sense of belonging. They considered strategies to maintain the social aspects of food;

> "I think… sharing food is really important…as I get older I'd like to think if I was living alone I'd go to Olive next door; "oh come around, I've just made some soup". Well, I do that now anyway. But I think that would be more and more important as you get older if you're not able to go out and do the things that you normally do …really important … to contribute…" Alice

The opportunity to share food, to share experiences linked to food may hold different meanings and experiences for different people but the importance of maintaining social eating situations and opportunities when getting older was recognised;

> "We enjoy it [the social side of food] …we did more when we were younger… we've drifted away from it a bit because, in a way, inevitably, your standards drop as you get older. You cannot evolve. … when you're an old person, if you don't have outward social……tendencies, you go down. I mean, for example, we tried to go to the pub on a Friday night up the hill… to meet a crowd of people who we've known for 20 years. And we don't go every week, but we go……twice a month. And what you need as an elderly person is social contact." Alistair

Figure 31   Alistair out for dinner with friends

Needing to maintain social contact and belonging within the local community requires places to meet and people to meet with. For the participants who were married their usual routine was that they ate their main meals with their husband or wife, there was a shared aspect to the meal even if both partners were watching television, they were still together, sharing food and being in the same space. When circumstances changed, for example the death of a partner, trying to find ways to maintain social eating could be difficult as described by Frank who had experienced this change;

> "In the early days I tried just going out for a quick meal on my own… At the pub though, I used to enjoy going to and we had a really good crowd in there. It was the one down at [neighbouring village]. And of course, that's been modernised now. Boutique…. I used to love talking to those old boys talk about the old days. .." Frank

The ability to feel the sense of belonging had changed. The challenge of eating alone, not having his wife's company and of no longer being able to enjoy the local pub environment, no longer being a place for the 'old boys'. Eating out alone could be challenging if someone did not feel that they belonged. However Ruth, who had not previously been married, had an established routine of eating out on her own

frequently at a local supermarket café. Even though she ate alone there was still an element of 'company' in these situations. Sometimes this would be incidentally meeting people she knew but also being surrounded by people getting on with their lives and eating their food even if she was not sitting with them to eat;

> "….this is other people in the…café…I suppose it's because there are other people there and there's…conversation going on…. I actually very much appreciate having…this café….I suppose that's what matters to me and if you live alone you could stay home between four walls which makes you feel as if you're in solitary confinement. And you can get very depressed as I know because I have suffered from depression. So I think that's one reason at the back of my mind why I go out and about as much as I do …I'm aware my life has changed quite a lot…" Ruth

Having the noise of others providing comfort and company. Eating out alongside others still managing to provide a sense of company and belonging in this example.

Refreshments provided at many of the groups attend by participants were often an anticipated part of the time spent together. Having a break for a hot drink and a biscuit can provide routine and structure. When working with a group of conservation volunteers the morning hot drink was a welcome break from the hard physical labour and a chance to talk. Similarly at a litter picking group, there were opportunities to meet together at different points of the year, a valued moment as it was difficult to talk when out picking up rubbish;

> "…. four-five times a year at the end of the litter pick we meet the at the local café …. sometimes we all gather at the litter pick…..that was lovely, we all meet up and it was in our time to catch up because …we don't see all of the group all of time…" Alice

Figure 32   Christine's cup of coffee and biscuit on a break doing conservation work

A sense of belonging to the group and to the local community that they are working hard to maintain, bringing people together through the chance to stop and talk whilst enjoying food, enabling them to feel that they all belong to the same group.

For all participants there were references to social eating situations. This could encompass informal catchups with friends, organised groups whose focus was food provision, organised groups who used food as a means to encourage people to talk and to meet social expectation of providing refreshments. Food given as a gift could symbolise someone's love for someone else and show that they were valued and belonged. The ways in which food was used for social connections was complex but the food itself could be as simple as a cup of tea, making someone feel welcome and wanted.

5.4.2   Cultural Connections: Belonging then and now

Participant's references to different cultural experiences related to both current and past situations. Ruth, Frances, Alistair, Derek, Frank and Thomas had all experienced living, working, studying and travelling overseas and food had been a central part of their experiences and their memories of these situations. Therefore, their discussions

about developing a sense of belonging within different cultures also raised a sense of belonging in these past experiences as well as their present worlds.

It was only Alice who spoke of having a strong sense of cultural heritage in terms of her national identity and how food was a way to honour heritage and something to pass on to the family. Food provided a clear cultural connection with her Scottish heritage;

> "Mum... used to make ....Scottish pancakes... my dad made.... a girdle....people go, like, "girdle?" It's a griddle, some people call it. It's very...very thick. And you make the pancakes on it... And I said to Polly [great niece aged 9] when aunty Alice can no longer do cooking, that's got to be yours. [and].... clooti dumpling...It's a bit like Christmas pudding, but not just as rich. It's like a rich fruit cake and you do it in a clooti which is a cloth. And you boil it for about three hours... And this is my mum's shortbread mould which she gave me.....My daughter has got one too. Mum bought her one..." Alice

Figure 33   Alice's mother's short bread mould

Alice's Scottish heritage was strongly intertwined with her sense of belonging with her family and she wanted to share this with younger generations. Not just sharing the food items but also the recipes and cooking equipment. The desire to share her Scottish heritage was also with friends, helping to organise a Burn's Night;

> "…we've always got a bottle of whisky…..everybody toasted and we did the Rabbi Burns, Larry then loaded some music and we did Gay Gordons…we rolled a rug up and we did proper dancing. We did a Burns night…we had this great big boy of a Haggis…. that tradition I loved that because there is that tradition of how you serve it and you address the Haggis…" Alice

Maintaining the food traditions of her Scottish heritage was very important and gave a deep sense of belonging. Passing this on to future generations was a way to ensure that this heritage was not lost. Alice was the only participant who spoke about maintaining food practices to maintain cultural connections.

Ruth, Frances, Alistair, Derek and Thomas had all lived overseas for varying reasons such as work, extensive periods of travel or to study. Recollecting these different experiences highlighted the role that different cultural food experiences had played in their lives and in forming their attitude and approach to food in older age. Being within a different culture is different to the previous experience of maintaining personal heritage but it was significant for these participants and their memories of their experiences portrayed a sense of belonging in times past.

Frank and Derek spoke about their experiences serving in the armed forces. Whilst Frank's experience had not been a culinary education (instead reinforcing the notion of eating whatever you are given and being grateful), Derek did learn about different food practices during this time;

> "…Sunday dinner…in Kenya in the Officers Mess was always a curry and by Saturday night I had withdrawals. (laughs) I would go watch the cook, the Mpishi, cooking the curry and he taught me about the frying the spices in it and the onions in the pan and putting the meat in and so on… " Derek

Figure 34   Derek's home cooked curry

In addition to serving in the forces Derek went on to work overseas for extended periods of time and travel extensively. His food adventures followed him back to his life in the UK, influencing tastes and enjoyment of a wide range of foods.

> "…between us…..we've lived in nine different countries... my curry comes from Kenya…. the hot things from Mexico when we were in the Caribbean and we eat a lot of Caribbean foods…mangoes and so on. We lived in Dominican Republic…well in Jamaica for several years and then in Dominican Republic for some years….yeah we been eating avocados ever since we were in the Caribbean and mangoes" Derek

Derek was not the only participant who worked overseas for many years;

> "… I've spent 30, 40 years of my life in overseas situations with my job… so I have had to eat what I've been given… Daisy [wife] has spent time with me [working overseas], therefore, her approach [to cooking] has changed… We have had to get used to taking the food as it comes… Having lived in Ethiopia which is one of the world's……main coffee producers… we got in the habit there… when we came back, we bought all sorts of green beans to roast… I suppose the green beans were not fresh enough or something….all these things have added something to our……lives… all these things have a different effect on your eating habits and your life…" Alistair

Eating local food whilst living and working in other countries showed an acceptance of local cultures as well as developing a sense of belonging within a different culture. There was sometimes a degree of pragmatism about this immersion in local food customs, partly there was the need to have something to eat but also thinking that there was less likelihood of getting ill when eating the same food as the residents were eating. However, there was also respect shown to the people providing the food.

The influence of these experiences on Derek and Alistair was very different. They both enjoyed food however for Derek the methods of cooking learned overseas, and the different foods eaten, were things that he continued eating and cooking when returning to the UK, he had wanted to learn about different cooking methods and different foods. The idea that he would ever be in a position where he would not be able to continue doing these things was something he could not contemplate. However, Alistair did not cook and whilst he greatly enjoyed food, he described how his experiences overseas had made him un-fussy and willing to eat anything. Both Derek and Alistair had been accepting of local customs and foods when living and working overseas but the longer-term influence on their personal food practices was very different. However, they both spoke with a sense of belonging in their overseas work situations and eating local foods had been an important part of this.

Ruth also reminisced about studying and working overseas and how she had embraced the food experiences she was part of. In previous years she had tried to replicate some of the foods she had had overseas though now she no longer cooked. Ruth's experiences were diverse from her time working in Africa where she spoke of the foods her Indian neighbours had given her to her earlier student days in Italy;

> "… pasta you see goes back to my student days in Italy. And I remember being shown by Italians how you really should eat spaghetti because in those days there wasn't that much pasta in this country… as students we were allowed to go to the University …cafeteria… And for 100 Lire… you could get this platter of pasta or risotto… I have happy memories again a …crowd of us….So I think again pasta evokes…happy memories…" Ruth

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Where participants had lived overseas, they had been emersed in the food culture of their temporary homes and wanted to continue elements of what they had learnt. When reflecting on these experiences there were varying ways in which they played a role in participants' lives at the time of being interviewed and also the meaning that these experiences held for participants:

> "………my eating habits have been, until retirement, have been so… "you get it if you're lucky". And I've never had any sort of fixed times for meals until retirement and therefore, from that point of view, it's been my life rather than my way of life…. well, my way of life has controlled my food intake and sometimes we didn't get anything. And sometimes we got more than we wanted." Alistair

Whilst participants talked about their experiences of working and studying overseas, Frances talked about how her father had worked overseas and brought food ideas home as well as how she had loved travelling overseas from a young age and how she had lived in another country for a couple of years. Frances had a strong food identity and she still loved opportunities to explore the markets and food shops when on holidays, building her repertoire of recipes and foods. Being a tourist in different countries is another way to experience cultures, perhaps in a more fleeting and temporary way yet still something experienced through new and different foods. There was also a sense of pride in being seen to try and enjoy foods from other cultures when they were seen as things that the 'typical British visitor' would not have eaten;

> "…I lived in Madrid for a couple of years…..I went straight from college... And I remember…because I wasn't mixing with Brits at the beginning when I went out there …and we were having…nibbles on the pavement before going home… And out came this plate they ordered… of what I thought was onion rings. And of course, it was calamari….and I said what's this? And they said try it first, we'll tell you afterwards… I said oh, they're delicious. What are they? "You're brilliant, you know, most Brits sort of try it and won't eat it after that…." Frances

This love of different cultural foods was continued when living back in the UK and was spoken of during the interview.

Whilst the sense of cultural belonging varied, from using food as a means of maintaining individual and generational cultural heritage to having a sense of belonging in past cultural experiences that continue to influence food practices in the present, these different experiences were important for the participants' sense of belonging and having belonged in the past.

5.4.3 Family Connections

Food had a role in connecting participants not just with global cultures and social situations but also with their families and their childhoods. For some their engagement with food reflected parental influence on the love of food and cooking. Some participants' early years had been during the Second World War and these experiences could mean a dislocation from family food practices due to rationing and evacuation.

All participants except for Thomas, talked to varying degrees about the influence of their parents on their current food practices. These were not always positive experiences however for Alice, Stephen and Frances food had been part of a sense of belonging in their families both as children and into adulthood. Alice's mother had been a very strong part of creating her love of food so when her mother developed dementia Alice wanted to ensure that the care home staff were aware of the importance of food for her mother and in a way that continued to provide a connection with her and her granddaughter;

> "…this is my mum's shortbread….and this was her shortbread recipe…when mum was in a nursing home she had Alzheimer's and we'd make up a little memory box…Milly [granddaughter], was, probably about 10 or 11. I said, well you write it in your nice writing for nana… So Milly wrote the recipe and I've still got that. And in mum's little memory box, I bought…. you know those little silicone paper cases? …so they would see that my mum was interested…in cooking and yeah…and baking…. some [recipes] are in my Mum's handwriting and that's precious to me, how lovely. To…actually see things with her writing on it….I think it's important to pass it on. I really do think it's so and I hope I've given my kids an interest in food and cooking for themselves to which I have obviously…" Alice
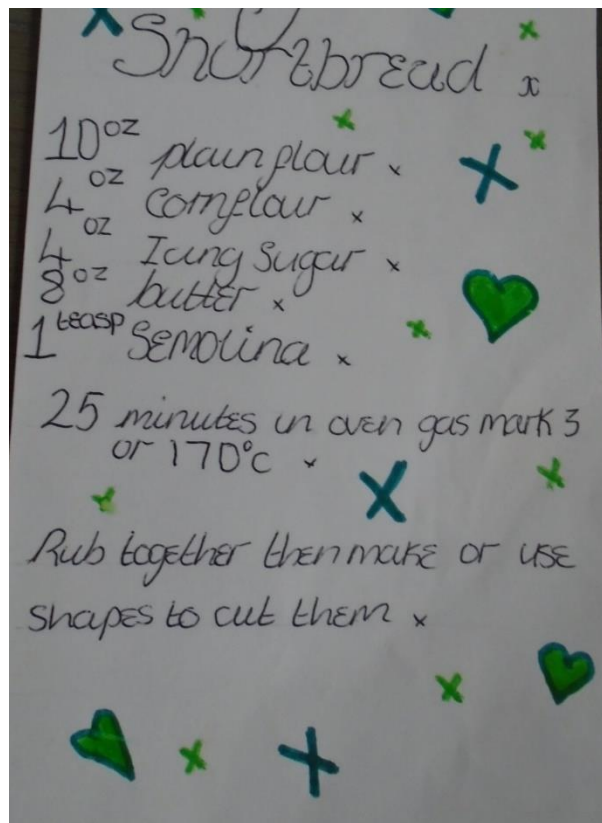
Figure 35   Alice's mother's shortbread recipe

The strong connection between baking, her mother and a sense of belonging embedded within this was important to pass on to younger generations of the family, just as Alice had passed on a sense of cultural belonging to their Scottish heritage.

Belonging within the family brought fond memories of past shared food moments with parents. Stephen's father died when he was 18 and he had certain recipes that he would recreate as they had been his father's inventions and they reminded him of his dad. Stephen recounted a tale about when 'the men of the house' had been left to sort their dinner as his mother was out;

> "…we were…the men were alone, you know? And me father was doing…sort of stock in trade sort of meal. And he was somebody that did everything at the double, you know? I think it came from the Navy. …. he chopped up all these chips and he dried them off in the tea towel… it was in the days before… you just went and bought a bag from the supermarket. Threw them in the pan …in one of the basket things. And then it sort of all foamed up… And then it carried on foaming and… me father had to get an icing knife or something and scoop it off… And then the aroma hit us. It was Cousins Imperial Leather. Me father

had chopped up the tablet of soap while he was doing the chips and put it in. *Laughter* Because it was white and we didn't see it… of course all that went in the bin, didn't it? *Laughter*" Stephen

The father and son cooking duo belonged together, working together to try to cook a meal for themselves. A sense of belonging in the moment, connected by food.

Parents' approaches to cooking were referred to by Frances as a foundation for her own ongoing interest in food, something that the family all shared;

> "… I was brought up interested in food. My two sisters and I, the three of us are still interested in food, very much so…. And it was always good quality and it was always…it was part of…it was part of life. It was just part of the family…."
> Frances

Continuing the enjoyment of food was a link with family and a place of belonging. Parents were also attributed with teaching cooking skills which for some, such as Derek and Frances, started early in their lives, equipping them with abilities in the kitchen at a young age;

> "… I've always cooked ever since I was 10 or 11 years old. I could cook you your Sunday lunch… my sister and I were brought up by parents who believed in people doing things…" Derek

Both Derek and Frances had carried on cooking and developing their skills further into adulthood and older age. In contrast, Ruth, who no longer cooked continued to enjoy foods that were redolent of her childhood and brought different meanings to her mealtime experience:

> "…I was reared on watermelon, peanut butter and sweet corn [Ruth was born overseas] ….when we got back to England…they didn't exist here… And it took years before any of them appeared… I do like all of those 'cause that reminds

me again of childhood. Especially watermelon." Ruth

"…a crumble or a fruit tart…with custard… it's so home-made… it possibly refers back to one's childhood because that's the kind of thing one's mother made… My mother was always cooking. Though she was a district nurse; I don't know how she managed it. And very traditional, you know. And she did all the right things like making seasonal puddings and bottling Victoria plums and making chutney and having roast dinners. So yes, I mean, I come from that kind of upbringing. " Ruth

Despite recognising that by not cooking any longer she had drifted further away from the way she had been brought her up, some foods brought her back to connections and memories of her Mother and her childhood.

Participants' recollections of childhood food were not always happy or nostalgic but still had a sense of belonging in a certain time and place. Christine's disinterest in food was something she had reflected on and identified as being present in early childhood. At the time of the interview she was living in her childhood home and indicated the front room of the house as the location for where the following would often take place;

"… I just sat there wouldn't eat it…won't do anything just looking out the window and sitting there. So that shows how little, even then… I refused to eat it… I don't want it I suppose… I just didn't bother to eat. Weird isn't it? …. But obviously that's in me, right? I just thought of that, from my very early age … I would have been five then or six, quite young… I remember that bit but food didn't feature in my life at all…." Christine

Participants' childhood food experiences appeared to be something that stayed with them into adulthood, for some this gave a positive sense of belonging to a family who enjoyed food and they were part of this and continued to be part of this, however there could also be these differing experiences which rooted participants in situations that were less positive.

As well as reflecting on past family foods Stephen, Alice, Christine and Alistair particularly talked about current family gatherings to share foods. These were sometimes at local restaurants or pubs, or meals shared at home. Photographs showed family members round tables for Christmas gatherings and others showed adult children helping to prepare Christmas foods. A celebratory reason to get together that had food at the heart of the gathering;

"So this is her [niece] fabulous kitchen and she likes cooking as well. You'll have Mary and April... It looks like they're getting things ready for Christmas morning. It looks like the veggies on the go. Somebody's on the beer... this could've been Christmas eve... it was lovely... There was 13 of us there so...that was great for Christmas..." Alice

Figure 36   Alice's Christmas

Growing up with a mother who loved baking and feeding the family had been a legacy continued by both Alice and her sisters and their children. Food provided a strong sense of belonging within this family group.

5.4.4 Summary

Food played an important role in being a connection to belonging in past and present experiences and had symbolic value when used as a gift. Belonging in social situations could include food with friends as well as food consumed with fellow group members either as a focus for gathering or as a way to encourage sociability during group activities. Belonging in different cultural situations influenced food practices whether because of visiting and living in different cultures or as a way to maintain personal cultural heritage.

5.5 Major Theme 3: Environments

Participants talked about the different environments that they ate in, in part because they would start describing scenes featured in their photographs but also because it was part of the different places in which they enjoyed food. Within this theme the Built and Natural Environments will be discussed and also the Economic Environments.

5.5.1 Built and Natural Environment;

Enjoying food in natural environments was something discussed by David, Alice, Frances, Alistair and Ruth and they showed this within the photographs they took. The sea and coast were one of the more frequent outside spaces referred to by participants who made the most of their coastal locations;

> "…. we go and walk around the harbour we might have a portion of chips between us and sit on the seat looking out to the harbour and enjoy that and it is something that you do and you look forward to. You know you go again. Especially if you enjoy the chips…" David

Alice and Frances talked of their enjoyment of eating food by the beach with friends, the descriptions reflecting the sensory experience of not just the food but the surroundings;

> "We had a really lovely day... That was the left over trifle from the WI... And this is… me sitting there. And it's like this was…would it be…be December? …the weather was…I came home sunburnt… because we're sitting out in the sun…" Alice

Reference to the weather arose with other participants sometimes as something that influenced food choices either directly or inadvertently due to changes in the weather meaning changing activities for people;

> "…what the weather's like, if it's a good cycling day we might take a sandwich and go and then have it in the park in the local town. We use the weather as our getting out" David

As an active 82-year-old cyclist the weather was important for getting out and enjoying the day. Food played quite a functional role in being something small and light enough to eat when out on a cycle trip and was a means of keeping fuelled but also enjoying the stop for lunch. Changes to weather could also mean moving to outdoor cooking as well as eating outdoors and enjoying eating with company outside;

> "….we're going to have to do a dinner pretty soon. Because we've been to a few people's in recent time and we'll, we'll do that. What we tend to do is do it in the garden. We wait till the weather's good….. we do barbecue a bit in the summer..." Alistair

Though for Thomas barbecuing was something that happened throughout the year, defying bad weather by cooking undercover. Whilst some accounts of eating outside

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were related to social occasions, there was also enjoyment in eating alone in the garden;

"...I often eat outside if the weather's right… And there are squirrels living in the tree … at the bottom of the garden is my bird table. So I feed the birds. And the cat likes eating outside… And I sort of gradually creak into action. So I've fed all the animals before I get my breakfast. …then I can sit and I can watch them eating. Which gives me quite a lot of pleasure. …. it gives me a lot of pleasure sitting outside …when I had my little dog we ate outside almost every meal every day…regardless of the weather….you had an anorak and a woolly hat… we went on regardless... I'm on my own but I'm thinking great thoughts. And I sometimes pray. Because it's so…very quiet because they're…everybody's gone to work and I'm sitting and I'm thinking oh, thank heavens I don't have to go to work. And I can take my time…." Ruth

Figure 37   Ruth's breakfast outdoors

Being able to spend time outdoors providing an opportunity to connect with the natural environment, food being a reason to stop and sit and contemplate whilst enjoying the surroundings. Whilst there is reference to being alone, there is the company of the animals also having their food.

The connection with the land through growing food to eat as individuals or couples has been discussed from the perspective of participants' identity, as well as purchasing

local produce such as fish from the shore or fresh eggs laid locally. Other ways in which Christine and Alice connected with and cared for the local environment was through litter picking and being part of a conservation group. Whilst food was not a central part of these groups it was a reason to have a break during hard work, a reward for preserving the local environment;

> "It's a tea break or a coffee break…there's about 10 of us volunteers down at the Valley…..so this is our break….which is provided by them. So with this particular one we're cutting down undergrowth down at the roundabout. So they want the cows to graze in there. So it's hard, hard work and I'm quite used to it. So that's just our break..." Christine

A different aspect of participants' care for the environment and links with food was Ruth and Alice's considerations of sustainability:

> "I wash the little plastic container the fruit salad was in and recycle that but you can't recycle the black ones at the moment….there's another guilt there because…I'm getting through a lot of plastic… for one person you are using all this ready stuff in trays and little plastic bowls and bottled water and bottled fruit juice, you know, just myself I'm creating a lot of plastic…well, I suppose it's waste. I try to recycle what I can. But again, I'm aware that… I'm actually creating a lot single-handed. And that's what happens with convenience food, isn't it?" Ruth

Food choices being important as it could mean unwittingly contributing to environmental waste and damage but also adding guilt to food choices.

Indoor environments were described too by participants as they had captured different locations in their photographs. Scenes portrayed a range of dining tables and trays in front of the TV;

> "I prefer to sit at the table to eat. We went through a phase where we were … started eating on trays in front of the TV. And I remember I said do you know I'd really like to get back to eating dinner around the table. Because that's when you actually talk. …So yes, it's so much part of communication and building family life. Sitting around a table eating together…" Frances

Figure 38   Frank's lap tray with dinner

Figure 39   Alistair's breakfast at the table

Figure 40   Thomas' croissants eaten out at a café in the sun

Different environments for different participants including connections to the past as well as providing opportunities to talk and the TV also being a focus at times. Participants described dining scenes when eating out, when sitting many members of the family round tables at Christmas as well as their home environments and preferred eating locations. Food again playing a role in the routines of where people located themselves at different times of day and different times of the month and year. Eating environments could evoke memories of previous experiences in the same place, familiarity and positive memories creating a good place to eat food;

"…this dining room area also because it's got a hard floor, vinyl floor…and over to the right, the windows look out onto the church gardens... And I also like this room because this reminds me of what I used to help at the toddler group. Which I did for nine years. And that's the room we had the table set up and newspapers everywhere and I used to help with the craft work. So I can also see these tables with glue and glitter. Toddlers running around. So I guess I…I like…I like this space." Ruth

Participants talked about their own kitchens and dining rooms as well as other people's and the environments of cafes and restaurants or even, in Ruth's case, a discussion about how she sometimes ate in her car because she was so busy going

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between different groups and friends. Eating food and cooking food being an activity that took part within a whole variety of different spaces and places and these environments having an influence on the enjoyment and engagement with food or food playing a role in guiding where participants located themselves.

5.5.2 Economic environment

Economic environments were referred to to some degree when considering how people would pay more for foods that met their standards of quality or ethical production (4.3.1). Considering this from more a financial perspective, participants made reference to both spending more for specific foods they wanted but also being careful or sensible with money in other food situations;

> "…I'm quite good at making good use of food …I bought a little whole ham and then I roasted it. So we had the roast ham for the two of us and then we had somebody around the following day and I made macaroni cheese with ham in it, which was that…It's the same way with chicken. If I do a roast chicken then we'll have the roast chicken for half of it. We have it…the breast and legs again the following day… and then usually I sort of use the carcass to make a good stock with and make a risotto. I only buy really top quality chicken, but because we're getting so much out of it, it doesn't work out that expensive to be honest." Frances

Being able to make the most of something like a chicken requires the skills and knowledge as to how to use the carcass, for example, to make stock. Doing batch cooking was another way in which Frank was able to use cheap ingredients to make several meals.

Going out for meals had financial implications. Alistair talked of finding himself being asked out to dinner by his daughter and then being faced with a bill for £150 but being in a position to pay it, whereas for Ruth, whilst she ate out frequently the process of taking photographs of her food and in her case also taking photographs of the receipts had got her thinking about how she was managing her money in relation to food purchasing;

"…doing this [taking photos] as I say has made me more aware of what I'm spending on my food. And now everything's going up and my income's not. That's something to be a bit concerned about, really. So I think you need to be aware of it. It's made me more aware." Ruth

Figure 41   Ruth's photographs of receipts from eating out

Eating regularly at a local supermarket café meant that Ruth was able to easily list the costs of the different meals she had and commented on how much food she got for the cost and also the quality but was conscious that prices were rising and portions were possibly getting smaller. She did however make the most of some food opportunities;

"…And the next one is out again, goodness me, I am going out a lot. …This is at the Toby Carvery … where you can have breakfast until 11:30 in the morning. … it's £6.49p for as much breakfast as you want and you can go back for more and tea or coffee, as much as you want. And you serve yourself. Anyway, I took a doggy bag, …because I had a big breakfast and I took some of it home. .. So one

of the sausages and one of the rashers of bacon ended up as being part of my supper. … I quite often do that I'm afraid….I take my own. No, I don't ask for a doggy bag…." Ruth

Despite money potentially influencing what and how participants were eating there was still a sense that participants were able to manage their money to enjoy their food. The role food played in their lives was important and meant that they would manage finances to continue eating in a way that was pleasurable.

Alice and David, already referred to in section 4.3.1, chose to buy some of their groceries from local shops. This provided a connection with the local community and also the local economy;

"… I really do think we've got to support our local shops now… if we don't support them we're gonna lose them… there is a fruit shop in the top of town and always on a Saturday…the thing is you buy your fruit at the supermarket because it's easier to carry home, but he's a little individual shop… and often when I'm in there there'll be somebody who lives up that end of town just buying a couple of apples, I'll go in there and I like Russet apples, they come a certain season. … So I'll buy a bag of something when I'm there to chew on. Just to keep the shop going… I've got to keep that shop going. It would be great to keep him, his shop…" Alice

Figure 42   Alice's image of shopping at a local monthly market

Money here being a way to exert individual financial power to both have food that was enjoyed as well as supporting local retailers.

5.5.3 Summary

Reviewing the images led participants to talk about the locations in their photographs as well as the food itself. These images included the built environment, predominantly their homes, as well as the natural environment. Food played a role in situating them in these environments as well as the food itself being influenced by the environment. An awareness of environmental impact in terms of sustainability was also something that was touched upon by a couple of participants. Another aspect of the environment was the economic environment. For some participants food played a role in their financial lives either due to having to think about being economical with what they purchased or perhaps placing importance on quality of food and being willing to spend more to get what they wanted.

5.6 Conclusion

Within this chapter themes from the ten participant interviews have been discussed to show the many different roles that food can have in someone's life and what it means to them. The participants all had different aspects of their identities highlighted by their interactions with food from people whose lives centred around food to those who were disinterested. Food played a role in participants being able to show others that they were valued and reflected how people belonged together whether as friends or family. The meaning of food being symbolic, a way to show love and inclusion and a way to communicate with others. The way in which food had a role in connecting people to different cultures and environments was also multifaceted and reflected the myriad of different experiences participants had had throughout their lives and where possible were continuing to have. Food has a very significant role in connecting people with each other and with different times, places and environments, both local and global.

Chapter 6   Discussion

6.1   Introduction

The aim of this study was to understand the role and meaning of food in the everyday lives of independent older people. This discussion chapter will consider how the research findings support previous work and explore more novel insights. The chapter will first focus on different aspects of the environment and connections with everyday food occupations. Then consideration will be given as to how food occupations can be viewed through a gendered lens but question whether it is time to de-gender food roles and create a new discourse. Following this, the complexities of temporal belonging will be explored in relation to how past and present food occupations can hold important insights into the role and meaning of food in an older person's life. Aspects of social eating will also be discussed highlighting the less explored topic of solo eating and how this can be a valued occupation and does not necessarily mean someone has a sense of isolation and loneliness. The considerations here however are also thrown into acute contrast to the significantly reduced possibilities of eating in company during the Covid-19 pandemic. Occupational science perspectives will be considered in relation to the different topics.

6.2   The Environment

From an occupational science perspective, the environment plays a central role in people's daily lives because it is where they carry out their daily occupations (Rowles 2008). The environment can influence the nature of those occupations and in return, people's occupations can change their environments, it can be a transactional experience (Yerxa 2009; Dickie et al. 2011; Hocking 2021). The findings from this study showed people carrying out a range of food occupations in both their natural and built environments with the economic environment also an influential factor. This section will explore all three areas and consider how age-related changes to health and wellbeing could alter people's interaction with their environments and in turn impact on the role and meaning of people's food occupations by altering how and where they are able to carry them out (Rowles 2008).

6.2.1   The Natural Environment.

This research was conducted during a winter season, a time where it may be anticipated that fewer activities relating to food may take place outdoors and fewer discussions about the outdoors would be raised during interviews. However, despite this there were various ways in which connections between food and the natural environment were discussed. Photographs of outdoor food occasions were perhaps more limited than they may have been in the spring and summer seasons however the presence of the outdoors in conversation and images despite the winter weather perhaps emphasises the importance of the natural environment regardless of seasonal changes.

There were times where people's interactions between the natural environment and food occupations could be viewed as a reciprocal transaction (Wright and Wadsworth 2014; Hocking 2021). For example, where people grew their own foods (adding to the environment as well as taking), spent time caring for their local environments and taking time to 'be' in the outdoors, appreciating their surroundings whilst eating food and looking after the wildlife in their surroundings (Wright and Wadsworth 2014). It is also proposed that connections with the natural environment are made when consuming food, even if not consciously being considered by the consumer. For example, something as simple as drinking a cup of tea provides a fleeting connection with the global, national, and potentially local natural environments through the harvested tea leaves and farmed sugar cane mainly imported from overseas and milk from dairy farms across the country or local producers. Whilst the connections with the natural world may feel more distant in these examples, it is still there and can still be brought to the fore by people's purchasing decisions.

When considering the range of ways in which people acquire their foods, with much being purchased in supermarkets rather than being home grown or bought directly from source, there may be a temptation to see a separation between a person and their environment in relation to food. However, as humans who need to eat, whether unprocessed or processed, food in its raw state is usually grown or reared in the

natural environment. The action of consumption thus creates an interaction with the environment even if not consciously acknowledged at the time of eating (Hocking 2021). Scholars have discussed the Western approach to the environment as being mechanistic (Heinsch 2012; Persson and Erlandsson 2014; Hocking 2021). The person and the environment as two distinct entities (Hammell 2021), with a tendency for the natural world to be viewed as a resource that can be taken from to meet the needs of the person, a machine to be worked rather than an environment to nurture (Persson and Erlandsson 2014). Occupations relating to food can be a way to connect person and environment (Hammell 2021). In this study growing fruit and vegetables at home was motivated predominantly by a desire to control freshness and quality of food however it also provided a much more immediate connection with the natural environment, a connection with the earth, the need to care and tend to the growing produce. The motivation for home grown produce in turn being a motivator to maintain physical health to be able to maintain the health of the growing environment.

This study has been carried out in a Western society and participants were living in a range of urban, semi-rural and rural locations. The backgrounds of some participants included careers that were reliant on working the land; farm hand, tenant farmer and dairy farm owner and manager. There were varying discussions demonstrating implicit and explicit awareness of connections with the natural environment through food occupations. Growing food for personal consumption, buying locally grown food or buying ethically sourced meat could be viewed as showing more awareness, care, and interaction with the environment. Food occupations (growing, buying, and eating) providing an opportunity to practice ethical and sustainable approaches (Persson and Erlandsson 2014). This however must be considered within the participants' economic environments (discussed further in section 7.3). They appeared to be in a financial position to be able to make these food choices, to be able to choose to spend more money on products meeting their ethical values, purchasing locally in smaller shops, or buying meat that could be traceable to the farm from which it came. Such decisions may not be affordable for people on smaller budgets (Persson and Erlandsson 2014) or something that people may feel unable to prioritise if trying to manage a small income. Therefore considering other ways in which people could maintain connections

between food and the natural environment may be important for an older person on a small income.

It may be harder to see a direct connection between the environment and pre-packaged ready meals or highly processed foods. Within this study the eschewing of ready meals was discussed with concerns about the quality of the food, its freshness, or the contents, though it was acknowledged that they served a purpose of convenience when needed. Environmental concerns were discussed in relation to wasteful packaging of individual meals in plastic containers. The connection between plastic waste and detriment to the environment is a clear consideration and perhaps one that would be more readily brought to mind in interviews. However, another way in which ready meals could be seen to impact on the connection between consumer and the environment is by the nature of pre-packaged food, it creates a disconnect between the natural origins of the food items (the environment in which they have been grown or reared) and the food that is then consumed. As described here by Hocking (2021);

> "Latino migrants to the US, for example, cannot replicate the taste of the food from home because American food production, packaging and retail practices remove interaction with its tactile, visual and olfactory qualities "the smell of the earth" (Bailliard 2013 p123) is distanced by layers of plastic and being marketed in indoor, air-conditioned stores lit by fluorescent bulbs" (Hocking 2021, p.226)

Food and food occupations can provide a very direct way for people to connect with the natural environment however it can also be 'packaged away' removing the overt links between the food consumed and where it comes from. For some people this may not be of concern, so long as there is food on the plate, fuel to keep energy going, then there may not be a problem. However, research has shown that there are many health and wellbeing benefits to connecting with the natural environments and nature, increasing a sense of physical and psychological wellbeing (Hammell and Iwama 2012; Heinsch 2012; Genter et al. 2015; Wells and Phalen 2018; Forsund et al. 2018; Hammell 2021). People's experiences of their occupations in a natural environment is quantifiably different to their experiences indoors or in more urban settings (Forsund

et al 2018; Hammell 2021). In this study, one of the ways people connected with the natural environment was through the food choices they made, the food they ate and where they ate and this was important to them.

Connecting with the natural environment can be a motivator to be active in different ways, for example, growing produce can involve much physical activity (Wells and Phalen 2018). However, food can also give a reason to pause, to sit and contemplate, to quietly engage with nature (Hammell 2014). Food can necessitate the need to sit and take time to eat and digest therefore providing an excellent reason to just 'be'. Quiet surroundings such as a garden at home could provide a perfect environment for this pause. The environment providing an opportunity to "connect with the self" as identified by Keller et al. (2010) and Thomas et al. (2017). The opportunity to spend time with personal thoughts whilst eating can provide a peaceful time for reflection. Humans interact with environments on a multi-sensory level (May 2011) and food can enhance this by providing additional sensory experiences. One of the founders of Occupational Science, Ann Wilcock, developed the concepts of Doing, Being, Becoming and Belonging (Wilcock 1999) to consider humans' interactions with their occupations and the world in which these occupations are carried out. Eating outdoors, in nature, provides a perfect opportunity for 'being'. 'Being' has been viewed in different ways by occupational scientists however, in this context, it provides time for contemplation, for spirituality and time to just exist (Hitch et al. 2014). Equally, this could be said to form a 'restorative environment', a place for both physical and psychological rest and recuperation (Wright and Wadsworth 2014).

Maintaining independence and health can be important at any age but perhaps particularly as people get older (Bryant et al. 2001) as they may face physical, cognitive or sensory changes resulting in altered access to familiar environments. Enabling someone to continue accessing spaces important to them for different food occupations could maintain or enhance a sense of well-being. When managing declining mobility, ensuring continued access to the local environment may be more likely to be considered from a functional perspective. For example, thinking about how someone may get in and out of their house to carry out tasks such as shopping or

getting to the doctor. However, enabling someone to continue food occupations that connect with the natural environment could have a significant impact on wellbeing, whether this be growing food or having breakfast in a private garden or a picnic lunch in another natural space. Loss of being able to continue carrying out food occupations in the natural environment due to no longer being able to independently access the environment could be viewed as occupational deprivation (Whiteford 2010; Hocking 2017). This is where situations outside of someone's control prevent them from carrying out their usual occupations. Whilst someone's physical changes are an internal difference impacting on engagement with occupations, it could be the lack of accessible environments that is the cause of occupational deprivation by creating a barrier to participation (Rowles 1990; Hocking 2017).

Carrying out outdoor food occupations can provide time to connect with nature, time for quiet contemplation or enjoying the company of others in a natural environment could provide a range of health benefits. Even if this were not possible, thinking about other ways in which to enable someone to maintain their connection to the natural environment through food could be empowering. For example, enabling someone to be by a window to connect with the outdoors whilst eating meals may still have benefits (Heinsch 2012; Hammell 2021). This echoes findings in a study looking at Belonging and Quality of Life for people with advanced cancer (McQuestion et al. 2010) it was observed that someone could still have a sense of belonging even through visual participation, the example given was bird watching from a kitchen window for someone unable to go out any longer, they could still feel a sense of connection with their environment and with the outside world even if they were unable to actively participate.

For the food gardeners, allotment keepers, purchasers of fresh foods direct from source and for those who find comfort and pleasure eating outside, changes to their abilities to maintain these occupations could have a complex and significant impact on their wellbeing. Changes to their occupational identity as food producers, ethical purchasers and people who enjoy the outdoors would be one aspect but also the reduction in time spent in the natural environment which, as already stated, provides

wellbeing benefits. By changing people's opportunities to 'be' in the natural environment this could negatively impact wellbeing and wear away the reciprocal transactions with the natural world that can take place whilst eating outdoors and eating fresh foods which in turn bolster a sense of 'being' in the world and 'belonging' in the world, again resulting in occupational deprivation (Whiteford 2010; Hocking 2017). For someone eating pre-packaged food, heated quickly in a microwave, served in a room devoid of views of natural environments there is a risk that this is alienating (Hitch et al. 2014) and dislocating someone from the human connection with nature. In the Background Chapter (section 2.2) the origins of this study were discussed including the experience of someone who could no longer grow their own fruit and vegetables to maintain their vegan lifestyle. There had been a rapid decline in health that had meant the connections with the outdoors had been swiftly and significantly reduced impacting on the sense of being and belonging within the natural environment.

Considering the negative impact of not being able to maintain outdoor occupations due to health and mobility changes, people's worlds may become 'smaller' (Forsund et al. 2018) and feeling a loss of connection with the world around them. Enabling continued access to the food occupations individuals identify as important to them would be the ideal however this may not always be easy due to access barriers (for example inaccessible allotments for wheelchair users). Food however holds the potential to enable someone to continue to have a connection with the natural environment, even if someone has very limited access to the outdoors, food is a very simple way to bring the outdoors in. Fresh fruit and vegetables can provide sensory connections with the earth, for example, carrots freshly dug, still with earth clinging to the skin and with the green tops still attached. Finding ways to grow items indoors could enable someone to feel a sense of productivity and again keep the connection with the natural world. Food can provide a range of sensory stimuli strengthening the connections between people and their environment.

Growing food can be a way in which to care for the environment and to show an awareness that the land is something to be nurtured and respected, not just

something to be extracted from for human benefit. Studies looking at Indigenous people's interaction with their environments have shown how they may see spiritual connections between the land, animals, and themselves, providing them with a sense of place and belonging (Hocking 2021). Occupations connected with the land such as growing and harvesting food, cooking outdoors, buying fish straight from fisherman on the shore or collecting eggs from the hens, could reflect similar connections even if not recognised by individuals specifically from a spiritual perspective. Older people have lived on the land for longer and may have developed a sense of kinship with their local environments and whilst not indigenous to the region, their awareness of the importance of preserving their worlds may be more embedded in their lives as they have had longer to develop this sense (Warburton and Gooch 2007; Wright and Wadsworth 2014). As highlighted by Genter et al. (2015) there was an increase in growing food through use of allotments and gardens during the second world war due to rationing. Some of the participants would have been children during the second world war, and some born soon after so still raised in families where food shortages influenced food opportunities. Over time the development of more convenience foods and easier ways to store foods such as household freezers (Genter et al. 2012) meant a shift away from growing food where people could afford these quicker ways to access food. The early years experiences and influences of supplementing food by growing fruit and vegetables however could be the early 'seed' that was sewn leading to continued growing of food in later life.

This study was carried out with people living in rural, semi-rural and suburban environments. The natural environment featured in participant accounts in a variety of ways and individuals were able to access a range of natural environments (from coast to woods and fields) without difficulty which is not something that is afforded to all. Participants homes were within rural and coastal locations which enabled access to natural environments and not having to rely on the urban planning infrastructure to provide green spaces. The ease of access to natural spaces may have influenced the degree to which the natural environment was discussed in connection with food during the interviews. Combining access to natural spaces with access to private gardens meant that there were a variety of places in which cooking and eating

outdoors was possible, though regardless of location it still required ambulant mobility to access the settings as well as potentially travel via car or bike. Even though there was good access to outdoor space, there were several ways in which this access could have been interrupted due to health decline, mobility changes and reduced access to transport. Whilst access to green spaces has been highlighted as unequally spread in urban areas and influenced by wealth with poorer urban communities having reduced access to natural environments (Hammell 2021), access to outdoor environments for older people could be influenced by changes to the aging body and have similar outcomes in terms of reduced wellbeing. Socio-economic status could also impact the ability to connect with the environment (Persson and Erlandsson 2014). Growing fruit and vegetables may not require great wealth in terms of the acquisition of seeds or young plants, but it does at least require access to and potentially ownership (or rental of) outdoor space, whether this be a garden, allotment, or pots on a balcony. This is a privilege not afforded to all or at least potentially not something that people may be able to prioritise.

Connections with the natural environment and food occupations will not be reflected in all older people's circumstances and priorities, however there may also be people who do not identify the natural environment as important to their food occupations because they have not had opportunity to experience the connections. Cooking groups, luncheon clubs and other food-based interventions may be part of an armoury of different methods used to support older people's nutritional intake at times of health or social changes however there could be additional benefits to considering the location of meals and food occupations; eating in the fresh air or being involved in food from land to plate, addressing more than regular meal provision. There are pockets of such interventions across the country for example Lambeth GP Food Coop (2021) or the network of care farms (Social Farms and Gardens 2018). Often these initiatives are to support people with different medical diagnoses as opposed to supporting people with no specific identified health needs to maintain access to their local environment and connect with food in this way. Consideration of continued access to the natural environment for everyone, whether healthy and independent or experiencing health changes, is important. Also providing new opportunities to

connect with the environment could support wellbeing for older people, and food occupations could be a positive way to facilitate this. Ensuring access to different aspects of the natural environment could be seen as promoting actively healthy ageing as supported by the WHO (2021) and discussed in Section 2.3.2 however, as also considered in Section 2, there can be challenges to accessing the environment (Handler 2014b) which may prevent people from participating in these opportunities.

Having photographs to refer to enabled more depth to the information to be gathered as the descriptions of environments could be illustrated by pictures and words and the pictures could prompt people to notice things that may not have otherwise come to mind. The influence of the natural environment in relation to food was shown in different ways; weather effecting what someone might choose to eat or where to eat or enjoying the outdoors whilst tending fruit and vegetables in the garden. Eating locations and food choices being shaped by the weather. If it was sunny and warm people might choose to eat outside though those who particularly talked about the natural environment would not necessarily let poorer conditions stop them from still eating outdoors. The weather may inspire a walk or cycle ride which could be combined with eating outside to refuel or reward the effort. There was a sense of enjoyment, of belonging and connection with the natural environment in these discussions.

6.2.2   Built environments

There appears to be very little reference within current literature to the built environments where older, home dwelling independent people may eat. Dining room environments within care homes is given some consideration (Bundgaard 2005; Evans et al. 2005; Philpin et al. 2014; Henkusens et al. 2014; Mahadevan 2014) however the home eating environments appear to be less well explored. It is possible that the use of photographs in this study prompted people to reflect more on their eating environments as it was there in an image rather than relying on recall.

The built environment was referred to when participants discussed where they had eaten the meals in their photographs. A mix of homes, restaurants and cafes were

shown. It may not just be the space within which the food was eaten that could hold importance but also the position of the consumer within the eating space. By having photographs to refer to it enabled environments to be conveyed more readily than having to provide a verbal or written description. Different dining tables and lap trays were evident, and their use and locations explained and additionally places for post-dinner resting were shown.

Kitchens have been described as like museums, preserving connections to the past as well as the present through kitchen equipment and places where people can be creative and express who they are (Hand et al. 2007; Meah and Jackson 2016). Kitchens featured to some extent in participant images but also guided tours of kitchens and dining areas were provided during some interviews; a tour of the living museum. Within the current research the environments in which participants prepared, ate and shared food were all important spaces and different elements of these environments were highlighted when particular meaning was attributed to them. There was pride in the technology of a particularly expensive fridge or the coffee machine that had held the same important place on a kitchen worktop for many years, reflecting an advanced and potentially more knowledgeable approach to coffee drinking, being 'early adopters' of the coffee pod style technology. Whilst kitchens have transitioned to be spaces of entertainment (Hand et al. 2007) within this study most food images showed people eating away from the kitchen area, preferring instead to be either in a dining room or using a lap tray in front of the television. Most of the kitchens were also separate, functional places of work and spaces for creativity with no room to entertain people at the same time. This may be reflective of generational preferences and traditions around the use of kitchen and dining spaces as separate or just a reflection of the layout of a home that had not been altered (Hand et al. 2007).

Whether or not people ate or entertained in the kitchen, participants highlighted different important aspects of their built environment, their engagement with food occupations and with each other as there was a tendency for couples to eat together at the table or on the sofa, reinforcing their routines and identities as a married pair

(Valentine 1999; Percival 2002). Knowing the best position to be in to sit in the sunshine coming through a dining room window, the sorts of foods contained in cupboards, fridges and freezers, dining rooms for informal or formal dining occasions or a favoured tray from which to eat food in front of the television, were all ways in which people interacted with food and their built environments. People ate in many different areas and within the home, tending to have set places for the different meals of the day and sometimes different places when eating with visitors or for more informal eating occasions. The importance of this is recognising how people may have their own individual preferences about their eating environments, spaces may hold different meanings or may be associated with different eating times and events (Percival 2002). The individuality of food occupations does not stop with the food itself but also the places in which it is consumed.

Whilst there were inevitably a range of different places that people chose to eat in this study, what was clear is that it was important to people to be able to choose where to eat and that environments could be attributed with different occasions. Homes are places of safety and security (Percival 2002; Board and McCormack 2018; Rowles 2018) where people have made the spaces their own and, in this study, had established places for cooking and eating that worked for them. However, it was also observed that, when someone did not want to be in their home space due to it feeling too confined, the environments they chose to eat in were still important. Having a preferred table to sit at in a supermarket café for example or a lunch club building having memories of past activities giving an additional sense of belonging.

People make their spaces work for them and Rowles (2018) highlights how the process of turning a house into a home is multifaceted. Part of the process however is the development of routines and daily behaviours creating a natural flow of activity (Percival 2002; Rowles 2018). Food preparation and consumption can be integral to this process. When someone is no longer able to carry out these food related tasks there is a risk that they will feel a dislocation with or alienation within their home environment.

Whether eating outdoors or indoors, there can be a 'sense of place' (Rowles 1990; Percival 2002; Aliakbarzadeh et al. 2022). Somewhere that feels familiar and comfortable, where food can be consumed in surroundings that can make someone feel rooted in their environment and provide a sense of belonging. All senses can be engaged whilst eating a meal making it a potentially rich bodily experience and the environment contributes to this, positively or negatively. If humans and environments are inextricably linked, then the importance of the surrounding environments should not be underestimated for any occupations that someone might be carrying out. Eating involves directly taking food from the environment (even if just from a plate) and ingesting it, there is a direct interaction between what is outside someone and taking it inside, and in turn it nourishes them and provides energy for other occupations (Wright and Wadsworth 2014).

Locations for eating may be very individual or perhaps connected to family patterns of eating and living, it can also be connected to socially constructed views of where is or is not acceptable or appropriate to eat (Hamilton 2010; Johansson et al. 2022). Within this study there was a considerable range of eating locations from dining rooms saved for entertaining guests to the lap trays for eating dinner in front of the television. People may associate eating with these different locations and have a sense of security and routine in these environments (Rowles 1990; Aliakbarzadeh et al. 2022). Being able to maintain their food occupations in established settings can provide a sense of place, with furniture, room layouts and other aspects of an environment being associated with the purpose and use of a space which, in turn, influences behaviour (Rowles 1990). For some people they may not mind where they prepare and eat food however for others, for example, eating in front of the television, may not be desirable as it lessens the chance of connecting with others through conversation over a shared meal and steps away from the traditional family routine of all sitting down together at a dining table. The location can be important for someone to feel engaged with the food occupation and motivated to participate. Equally changes to the environment, for example moving a chair and dining table, to be positioned by a window so that someone can connect with the outside world, may enable someone to engage with their meals and connect with a wider world. There is a need to understand the

importance (or otherwise) of where people carry out food occupations in their home environments.

When someone is unable or unwilling to continue food occupations in the expected environments (e.g.: no longer wanting to cook) they may find themselves seeking new locations that enable a sense of place, somewhere to feel secure and confident in their new interactions with food, which may not fit in with traditional constructs around food occupations (sitting alone in a café, eating in the car) but which enable the individual to continue to eat when, what and how they want. Spaces that, for some people, are places of exploration and excitement such as a new food shop, can be an overwhelming place for another person. A kitchen for one person may represent opportunities for creativity but for another person it may be a place of stress and burden. Spaces and places can have strong emotional connections and assumptions should not be made as to what these connections are as they may well not be the socially constructed and socially expected feelings about an environment. A room in a childhood home may hold deep emotions if experiences were unhappy and could impact on actions as an adult, equally happy memories in a particular location could provide a comforting environment to revisit.

6.2.3   Environments: The Economic Environment

Whilst participants were not directly asked about their economic status, no one indicated that they had any financial difficulties that impacted on them eating or buying the food they wanted to have. Participants were born between 1932 and 1950 meaning that they spanned the 'Silent Generation' and the 'Baby Boomers'.

> The silent generation, born 1926-45
> The baby boomers, born 1946-65 (Rahman and Tomlinson 2018, p.20)

People in these generations have been identified as being more likely to have;

> "…enjoyed much higher incomes than predecessors at each age, but this progress has all but disappeared for generation X (born 1966-80) …" (Rahman and Tomlinson 2018, p.20)

Participants did not discuss any financial struggles, some talked more overtly about making shrewd financial decisions about food purchasing but there was still a sense of freedom of choice, being able to buy what was desired. This would echo literature discussing these generations as having a history of being in work and making the most of the post-war economic growth (Twigg and Majima 2014; Resolution Foundation 2018). Whilst this study only had a small number of participants and did not actively ask for socio-economic data, they do reflect some of the characteristics of these two generations. Having the disposable income to spend on quality food or, if desired, to go out for dinner, meant that people who loved food were able to pursue this. For people on a very low income, no matter how much they may want to prioritise foods they love and enjoy, money will have to cover several important things therefore food costs would need to be managed. Whilst the Silent Generation and the Baby Boomers are seen as wealthier generations, inequalities do exist in all ages (Twigg and Majima 2014; Resolution Foundation 2018).

The educational backgrounds of participants in this study, spanned a range of levels (information voluntarily referred to in interviews) including people who had attended university. This could mean that they had the potential to gain employment with higher incomes. Other generational factors that could influence relationships with food could include growing up in households impacted by austerity and reduced access to foods either directly due to war-time conditions or the subsequent time of rationing and food scarcity (Lyon et al. 2011). This could create more frugal approaches to food including the ability to make things 'stretch', having the skills to use every piece of meat and making sure not to waste fruit and vegetables by letting them go off. No participants spoke of any continued paid employment and only one talked about their partner still working part time. Retirement can be a significant change associated with ageing and this can have an impact on people's economic status (Swift et al. 2017). This however was not raised by any participants as a problem in terms of finances, perhaps again reflective of their generational status but also of this research cohort. As highlighted already, other people of similar ages may face many more financial

challenges and assumptions should never be made that different generations have no financial concerns (Resolution Foundation 2018).

Buying food that met personal standards of quality and taste was something that people were willing to invest in where this was valued. Value negotiations (Sobal and Bisogni 2009) were observed in discussions where people were prepared to pay more to get food that they saw as of higher quality but then making the food stretch to several meals. There was also a frugality in being able to make the most of the food by being able to make several different meals from it, showing skill and knowledge of preparing and cooking food. Ensuring that there was limited waste from food by being able to use it in different ways for different meals reflects the importance of food for some people and that there was an economic consideration when buying food. People may be prepared to pay more for quality, but this is an investment and therefore should not be wasted.

Being prepared to invest in eating in cafes and restaurants shows another way in which food can hold meaning for someone. Spending money on food can enable someone to eat in a more sociable environment rather than eating alone at home. It also enables someone to be served food removing the need to manage other food occupations such as preparing the food, cooking and washing up afterwards. Cooking at home can take energy and motivation. If it is a less enjoyed occupation, having the money to be able to go out for a meal means eating the food can still be enjoyed.

Most participants talked about having a range of places to shop so that they could 'look around' for different quality items and be financially aware of costs when purchasing. Having freedom to spend money on preferred foods was another way in which people can exert choice and independence when they have the finances to do so. This can be important at any age but being comfortable financially has been shown to be one of the things that can contribute to quality of life in older age (Leeuwen et al. 2019).

As highlighted in a study by Omar et al. (2014) and earlier Carrigan et al. (2004) older consumers may not have featured frequently in supermarket advertising campaigns but there is a percentage of the active older population who are both financially stable and willing to spend more money on their food whilst making discerning choices. The proposal from the research (Omar et al. 2014) is that older people are a rather 'untapped market' and that gaining a better understanding of the 'grey pound' could be beneficial for retailers. Reference to the range of different shops and shopping experiences sought by participants in this study appears to be reflective of people willing to pay more for quality produce and being prepared to go to different retailers to be able to get what they want.

The more stereotyped image of older people being 'set in their ways' living in stagnating environments, shrinking in choice, and lacking in energy to participate does not fit the participants in this study or in the work of Omar et al. (2014), Carrigan et al (2014) and Host et al. (2016b). There is also reference to older people being marginalized through the economic changes that take place through retirement (Swift et al. 2017). This is discussed in relation to society's views of older people as no longer contributing and having lower economic status (Swift et al 2017). In relation to the participants within the current research, their reflections on the different ways in which they shopped for food and ate out in different venues, would reflect people who were actively contributing to the economy through spending on food (amongst other things) and were engaged with the economic world in which they lived.

In addition to having adequate finances to enable people to shop in preferred places and buy the quality of items they want, people needed money to be able to actively participate in some of the different groups or events they participated in. As discussed in Section 5.4.1, social connections were important for people and often this included food. Whilst the food itself in these situations may not have been expensive, there could still be a cost and potentially a cost to belonging to the group as well. Being able to maintain this active lifestyle can be important for healthy ageing (Bryant et al. 2001) but to be able to access these different opportunities money may well be needed.

The three different aspects of environment discussed here all play a significant role in people's food occupations and connect with the principles of active ageing (WHO 2002; WHO 2021). Economic considerations, autonomy, independence, quality of life and the physical environment are all linked (Section 2.3.2) with food in different ways. However, for people to maintain the food occupations important to them they need to be able to continue to interact with these different aspects of the environment which can potentially be challenging due to barriers (Handler 2014b) preventing older people from fully participating when age related health and mobility changes occur. There are risks of people experiencing occupational deprivation if the environments around them are not accessible as this could prevent them from continuing with food shopping if desired or accessing outdoor spaces for eating or growing food (Hocking 2017). Occupational science theorists propose four areas that are described as 'occupational rights';

> "….the right to experience occupation as meaningful and enriching; the right to develop through participation in occupation for health and social inclusion; the right to exert individual or population autonomy through choice in occupations; and the right to exert benefit from fair privileges for diverse participation in occupations (balance)…" (Stadnyk et al. 2010, p. 338)

For people to experience occupational justice, to have their occupational rights upheld in the context of food and the environment, they need to continue to assert choice and autonomy and access the environments in which they can engage meaningfully with food occupations which in turn will positively impact on their health and wellbeing and maintain occupational balance (Hocking 2017).

6.3   Transcending Gender

This study involved people who identified as cisgender, heterosexual and homosexual older people and did not involve anyone who identified as non-binary or transgender therefore the discussion relating to gender is in this context. Within this study, experiences of watching mothers cooking were often discussed. When there were references to fathers' interests in cooking tended to be in relation to their suggestions,

for things that their wife could cook, or occasionally cooking when their wife was not at home. With mothers predominantly taking the main role with food tasks, this afforded some opportunities to ensure their sons learned to cook as well as their daughters. Within this research however this was only really talked about because of a mother's identity within the suffragette movement which gave a drive to ensure her son could cook at a young age. Less planned changes to the typical 'mother in the kitchen' role models were situations generated by separation from parents during the war or being brought up by a single parent. This could result in children and young people observing different food roles being carried out by the adults around them. The predominant role model in the kitchen was 'the mother' thus reinforcing the 'schema' (DeVault 1994; Oleschuk 2019) of women's roles being in the kitchen and traditionally being how people learn about food occupations.

In addition to maternal and paternal food role models there were several other influencing factors that lead people to developing their own food identities and roles. Going to University, studying, or working overseas and being in the armed forces were all ways that were seen in this research as influencing the roles that people took in relation to food. These experiences expanded food knowledge and skills and had the potential to provide new social learning experiences. Being away from home without parents to provide food necessitated the acquisition of new skills such as cooking to ensure there was something to eat or exploring new eating venues thus starting the expansion of food tastes and choices. For example, a study by Blane et al. (2003) acknowledged that men serving in the military could have opportunities to learn basic cooking skills. These different influences, experiences and exposures could be part of the reason why, in this study, there was observed to be a range of food occupations carried out by both the men and women with some traditional roles being described but also blurred boundaries between men and women's food occupations. Therefore, it is proposed that assumptions should not be made about the gendered food occupations of older people as this research reflected a range of roles being carried out by the men and women.

Historically women have tended to stay home to care for the family thus perpetuating the image of cooking as 'women's work' (DeVault 1994; Neuhaus 1999; Valentine 1999; Cairns et al 2010; Flagg et al 2013; Guptil et al. 2017; Oleschuk 2019; Lempert and DeVault 2000; Wolfson et al. 2021; August et al 2022; Astbury et al. 2022). Women have increasingly been in paid employment meaning some shifting of home management roles and a decrease in time spent in the kitchen, yet women still maintain the status of being the gender who proportionality carry out more of the foodwork (DeVault 1994; Flagg et al. 2013; Oleschuk 2019; Astbury et al. 2022). During recent studies of women's paid work and caring roles during the Covid 19 pandemic, women of working age with children, have still been seen to carry the burden of caring tasks within the home as well as maintaining paid employment (Oleschuk 2019; Hupkau and Petrongolo 2020; Astbury et al. 2022).

Gendered food roles particularly in relation to heterosexual couples has been the subject of discussion for many years (Neuhaus 1999; Sindenvall et al. 2001; Szabo 2013; Szabo 2014; Vesnaver et al.2015; Vesnaver et al 2016; Rawlinson and Ward 2017; Oleschuk 2019). In this study participants were born between 1932 – 1950, a time when women were traditionally responsible for preparing the majority of food for their husbands and children (DeVault 1994; Neuhaus 1999; Rawlinson and Ward 2017). Whilst there were certainly reflections of more traditional food related roles, it was often not as binary as perhaps it may frequently be considered for older men and women.

6.3.1   Culinary Competence and Shared Roles: Challenging the Discourse

Male participants and husbands of female participants in this research reported a range of cooking abilities and frequency of cooking, being able to show skill, ability, and creativity through cooking. Sometimes there were specific areas of cooking, such as having 'signature' dishes, which could be carried out as a show of ability to others as an 'event'. However, there was also the day-to-day cooking carried out independently of their female companion or alongside. Mattsson Sydner et al. (2007) saw that more equal relationships in food preparation were unusual, however, here there are partnerships where couples carried out complex negotiations when they were

planning their meals. This is not specifically focusing on gender but reflecting that partner will work together within food decisions (DeVault 1994; Vesnaver et al. 2015; August et al. 2022)

As discussed earlier, whilst socio-economic data was not gathered for the participants, there was reference by some participants to studying at university level. For men, undertaking higher education has, in some studies (Taille 2018; Wolfson et al. 2021) been correlated to show a potential increase in engagement with cooking and kitchen related roles that may have more traditionally been seen as women's work (Taille 2018). However, Taille (2018) also noted that this was seen in reverse for women in their study who tended to do more cooking from scratch when they had lower educational attainment. This was a study in America and with different age groups therefore must be viewed cautiously when considering the relevance to participants in this study. However, it provides another aspect to question.

Educational status appeared to vary between participants, with four people overtly referencing time at university. Higher Education may not have then led to these individuals all cooking meals from scratch, however it did possibly enable them to experience a broader range of foods as well as perhaps having more equitable views of gender and roles relating to food occupations (Flagg et al. 2013). Additionally, education at university level could result in higher paid employment (Wolfson et al. 2021) and subsequent higher economic status in retirement resulting in more disposable income to spend on food if that was an area of enjoyment, whether food to eat at home or having the disposable income to eat out.

Both male and female participants referred to studying at university. Oleschuk (2019) raises the point that whilst there is much discourse around learning cooking skills in early years, there is also an importance in considering the development of cooking skills across the life course with particular focus on the time in early adulthood where people may be starting to develop their own cooking skills and tastes. This adds to the notion within this study that travelling, studying away from home, and joining the

armed forces whilst being in early adulthood could all have had an influence on people's food occupations and food roles throughout the rest of their lives.

6.3.2 Division of Labour

In this study people had differing levels of ability and interest in food occupations which invariably influenced who carried out the different food tasks within the home. Couples had developed roles together over the years and these had continued through into retirement, to a greater or lesser extent. Variation being seen mainly when a role was particularly undesired by one person and desired by the other, then, food tasks could shift between the pair (DeVault 1994; August et al. 2022). When considering the lesbian couple, both had roles relating to food which, were they a heterosexual couple may have been viewed through male and female stereotypes; one person taking on most food related tasks whilst the other was out at work. However, this was obviously not 'gendered food roles' but just 'food roles'. The natural shared practice of taking on different roles in relation to what they had capacity to do (August et al. 2022).

The division of labour between heterosexual couples was seen by Daniels et al. (2012) to reflect whether one person worked, and one did not. The individual at home being the one who then naturally took on the responsibility of cooking. The division of labour, based on who has the time or resources to complete the required food tasks (as opposed to gender), is also reflected in August et al.'s (2022) study looking at the cooking practices of heterosexual and gay male couples. There was more equity of roles seen within same sex relationships with heterosexual relationships tending to see roles being linked more to capacity, interest and years of marriage shaping what responsibilities people had for food tasks (August et al. 2022). However, roles linked to capacity were also observed in the practices of the gay male couples in the study (August et al. 2022).

Age has been speculated to play a part in whether a couple would view food occupations as the responsibility or domain of the woman in a relationship. Alternatively, there is the possibility that, for a couple ageing together, it could lead to a more equitable view of roles, with division of labour being based on other factors

rather than gender. The years of marriage and other life experiences creating a partnership of two people working together rather than two people working in gendered role silos (Flagg et al. 2013). In this research it would be the latter view that is perhaps the more dominant discourse.

For the couples within the study there was a sense of shared practice, of interdependence, something which can be seen as at the heart of being in a human relationship (Hammell 2014). There were food related roles taken that had been carved out over years of living together, whilst negotiating the challenges of maintaining food intake whilst working, raising a family, or travelling. When children left home and retirement began it could be particularly 'freeing' in terms of food tasks. This might be because it afforded more time to carry out food tasks if that is desired or someone could lessen their involvement as a partner took on more tasks and developed a newfound interest in food and cooking. Cooking may be reduced in favour of eating out now that the demands of being in work have ended. Even when couples had established food related roles it did not mean that tasks could not be swapped as and when needed in response to things such as health changes.

6.3.3 Men's Cooking Skills / Frequency

The cooking skills of male participants varied as did the amount of cooking they did. There were couples who continued the more traditional male / female food roles however, had their wives no longer been able to cook the men would have been able to step in and cook or at least ensure food was still provided even if not through their own cooking. The one widower in the study being a good example of taking on the role of cooking for himself after his wife had died. The oldest male participant carried out all food related occupations and enjoyed having control over this. Then there were variations in between. Research considering differences in cooking skills in relation to older men and women discussed how older men often do not have the knowledge and skills to cook for themselves or indeed the motivation (Lumbers and Raats 2006; Moss et al. 2007; Atta-Konadu et al. 2011; Host et al. 2016b).

However, in other work there are contrasting reports echoing the findings in this study. For example, the widowers in Andersen's (2020) study showed a range of cooking skills and several took pride in their adventurous approach to cooking and Kullberg et al. (2011) studied older men's food activities and recognised that some of the participants did enjoy cooking and gained pleasure from it (Valentine 1999). Some studies have suggested that when men are more involved in the kitchen it is not treated with the same sense of domestic drudgery as has been suggested women may feel when they have been responsible for the meal preparation for the family over the years (DeVault 1994; Sidenvall et al. 2000; Shordike and Pierce 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Cairns et al 2010; Daniels et al. 2012; Szabo 2014; Andersen 2020). It has been suggested that men see cooking as more of a leisure activity and to demonstrate skills and creativity (Cairns et al. 2010; Szabo 2014; BjØrner et al. 2018). Andersen (2020) found that for some male participants they had always carried out some cooking, but it was only when their wife died and they had the full responsibility they embraced this, some did however acknowledge that it was still more of a novelty, so they had not got to the point of finding it boring. The men in this study reflected a spectrum of different interests and abilities in different food occupations, it was certainly not a binary male: female divide.

6.3.4   Whose role is it anyway: Caring and Dieting

There were aspects of care for others shown through food by both men and women in this study. Nurturing and caring through food has tended to be seen as the preserve of women cooking for family and friends (DeVault 1994; Shordike and Pierce 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Szabo 2014; Oleschuk 2019; Andersen and Brünner 2020) with older men only starting to be involved with this aspect of food when their wives need caring for. Atta-Konadu et al. (2011) for example, examined how unpaid spousal carers managed to cope with food related tasks when their wives were living with dementia. They refer to men finding taking on the new role of planning, preparing, and cooking for themselves and their families as challenging (Atta-Konadu et al. 2011). Traditional views of men and food have been about reinforcing their masculinity, their strength and 'maleness' (Newcombe et al. 2012), using food as a way of showing care for

another person could be seen as a threat to this masculine identity by adopting more feminine food roles.

This threat to masculinity through showing care for others through food did not appear to be a concern or consideration raised by men in this study. Similarly the case study of Walter in Valentine's (1999) work where, following the death of his wife he started to teach himself to cook and then continued the caring food practices of cooking and delivering favourite foods to other family members (Valentine 1999). Both men and women were seen to use food (whether cooked from scratch or taking someone out for food) to show care for others and a chance to connect and communicate and this equally applied to the lesbian couple. This is reflective of research by Szabo (2013) who interviewed working aged men who did a considerable amount of the cooking at home. Whilst participants in Szabo's (2013) study continued to use some language that reflected traditional gendered roles relating to food they did also use food in ways to show care for others and to connect.

Another often gendered link with food is that of dieting, weight management and nutritional intake. This has been seen as something that women are much more likely to be concerned with (Szabo 2013; Szabo 2014; Guptil et al. 2017; Seymour-Smith et al. 2020). However, in this study it was something discussed more by male participants than female. Varying strategies for weight management were discussed; recording weight every day, attending Weight Watchers and monitoring food portion sizes to maintain what was deemed to be a 'healthy weight'. There was an active awareness of weight management which was unexpected and did not fit the stereotypical image of older males' attitudes to food. Whilst the weight management may have been led more by health considerations than image, there were still references to other people's sizes that could imply an awareness of not wanting to look overweight due to it not being socially acceptable.

This highlights how individuals need to be understood without making gendered assumptions. Men and women may be weight conscious or not, they may or may not be able to cook, and may or may not be motivated and enthused by food occupations

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and there is a spectrum of variations in between. When working with older people around food support, these combinations and variations need to be discovered and understood for each individual if they are to be supported effectively without assumptions being made about gendered roles.

6.3.5   Gendering Culinary Convenience

Previously ready meals were discussed considering people's views about their healthiness or otherwise. In this study fresh, home-cooked produce was valued more highly, however, there was an acknowledgement by both men and women that ready meals had their uses. Literature has consideration of how older women and older men may be judged differently when they opt for ready meals (Andersen 2020). Whilst this is a very specific aspect of food related practice for older people it is another way in which gendered views can be seen to be reflected. The view that women should be able to cook healthy meals from scratch (DeVault 1994; Valentine 1999) and that they are therefore somehow 'failing' when they resort to easier ways to get their food versus a positive response to men using whatever means they can to ensure they still get food as they are not expected to be able to cook in the first place (Andersen 2020). Mattsson Sydner et al. (2007) in their study across eight European countries talked of the differences between male and female responses to changes in their situations as they became older with men accepting convenience foods so long as they were tasty. For most participants in this research, regardless of whether they were male or female they expressed similar thoughts about ready meals and may have equally felt a sense of failure or surrendering to convenience by accepting ready meals as the main means of eating.

Ultimately being able to cook from scratch reflects skill and ability and is associated with better health outcomes (Taillie 2018; Oleschuk 2019) therefore regardless of gender people should be supported to be able to prepare and cook meals from scratch with processed and ready meals being for certain occasions. Equally, it could be argued that ensuring people have reasonable knowledge around the health qualities (or otherwise) of foods enables people who are unable to cook to at least make decisions about which ready meals to use based on good knowledge and understanding of food.

None of this needs to be about gender and congratulating men on being able to 'cook' for themselves because they can heat up a ready meal could be deemed patronising and deskilling. Ready meal use could be more reflective perhaps of people without cooking skills and knowledge but also for people who just do not enjoy cooking and / or eating as well as using them for moments of convenience; again, this can apply to any gender. The societal pressure about relying on ready meals could be different dependent on gender; for example, a woman who lacks interest in food occupations could feel that they are not fulfilling an expected part of their female role (Valentine 1999). This consequently perpetuates the stereotypes, when it is perhaps time to start thinking about people as humans and not as gendered beings interacting with food. Ensuring people who are not interested in food or kitchen work have the knowledge to make the best decisions about convenience food. This is more of a case of considering culinary competence than gendered use of ready meals.

6.3.6 Time for a change

It is suggested here that it is time to take a step back from making gendered assumptions about what roles older couples may have had and may wish to have, in relation to food. The findings from this study would suggest that there needs to be more research into, and understanding of, the changing roles for older people in relation to food, moving away from previous gender stereotypes. This echoes the recommendations of Szabo (2013), Szabo (2014), Plastow (2017) and Andersen (2020), who highlight how more recognition is needed to understand changes to the traditional views of older male and female roles in the kitchen. This needs to include people identifying as transgender or non-binary. Societal understanding of what gender means to individuals is changing rapidly and this is not just relevant to younger members of society. People over 65 years old grew up at a time when it was not so acceptable to discuss gendered identities and sexuality that fell outside of 'the norm'. This has a legacy of older people within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community having years of not fully being able to live openly for fear of reprisal but who are now finding ways to be themselves and food, being such an everyday part of life, could be another opportunity for expression and communication with others (Kneale et al. 2021). Supporting individual non-gendered food roles could be part of

the way in which individuals feel accepted and able to express their identities every day.

Many occupations in themselves have become gendered. With food occupations being ubiquitous, always present to a greater or lesser extent in humans' lives, it has had a long time to become gendered. Culturally domestic occupations including food related work have been seen as women's work (DeVault 1994; Hocking 2000) and cultural values can be strong influencers over the continued gendered practices of certain occupations.

Equally people can use occupations to 'do gender'. Women may continue to do the food occupations within the home because this is seen to reinforce their gender, to enact it and 'do' gender through food (DeVault 1994; Hocking 2000; Flagg et al. 2013; Dowers et al. 2019; August et al. 2022), providing meaning and identity as a woman or how society suggests women should be. Being a woman who does not 'do' food occupations there could be a sense, from a societal perspective, that they are not fulfilling their role. Whereas a man who does not 'do' food occupations may not receive the same sense of disapproval, their lack of food occupations may go unnoticed as being 'the norm'.

Views of other people's ways of 'doing' food occupations may be constructed through their own experiences and constructs of who carries out which occupation. This could lead to supporting others with food with gendered occupational role assumptions. This in turn may influence questions and suggestions for the types of support being offered. For example, someone struggling with food occupations, if male, may be offered ready meals more readily on the premise that they are less likely to know how to cook or have any desire to be in the kitchen. Women may find options focusing more on ways to make cooking easier rather than being asked whether they want to continue cooking. Older men may be praised more overtly for carrying out food occupations independently and demonstrating knowledge and skill in the kitchen whereas for older women this may be the expectation. Thus perpetuating, however subtly or overtly, the gendered nature of food occupations. The men's skill at cooking being more 'seen'

than the women's whose cooking becomes that of the hidden everyday occupations (Hasselkus 2006).

Intersectionality of gender and age stereotypes could compound this further, the socially constructed views of older age (Holstein and Gubrium 2007) as being a time where people are less capable. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.1), societal views of older people as declining in physical and cognitive function combined with views that men are more limited in their abilities and interest in food occupations could result in unintentionally lower expectations and potentially reduced offers of support to actively participate in food occupations. However, if active ageing is to be promoted through supporting people to maintain involvement with everyday occupations, gender should not influence opportunities and social constructs around age and gender need to be questioned (Rudman 2012).

When considering the assertions at the beginning of this study that examining people's everyday occupations is important to make the unnoticed noticed, here, it is highlighted that gender norms and gender 'un-norms' need to be noticed to de-centre the discourse around men and women's work in the kitchen. Un-gendering food occupations and instead focusing on people's culinary occupational competence. Also, the need to consider that food occupations carried out between couples, may be because of allocation of roles founded on capacity, time, or interest. Something that remains less noticed as couples have developed these roles over many years and just 'get on with it'. More examination of the allocation of same sex couples' food occupations could be a means to better understanding how food occupations are gendered or whether it is a case of division of labour.

Literature does show some degree of shifting towards more egalitarian approaches to domestic tasks including housework (Flagg et al 2013; Taillie 2018; Wolfson et al. 2021; Astbury et al. 2022) however the predominant discourse is still that women carry out most food occupations, particularly the domestic, daily cooking that remains unseen as it has become so commonplace and 'everyday' (Hasslekus 2006; Oleschuk 2019). However, there is a significant amount of research focusing on older women which

could be inadvertently perpetuating the view that food occupations are the main preserve of women.

Considering articles discussed in the literature review (Chapter 3); several the studies focused specifically on men or women and whilst the studies do consider important topics there is still a gendered divide. Findings from these studies reinforcing a binary perspective (Shordike and Pierce 2005; Mattson Sydner et al. 2007; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Atta-Konadu et al. 2011; Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Newcombe et al. 2012; Edfors and Westergren 2012; Kullberg et al. 2013; Wright-St Clair et al. 2013; Monturo and Strumpf 2014). Of course, there are articles considering both sexes and it is not as simple as de-gendering research but again, is it now time that this needs to be considered in more depth when exploring research topics. The four articles in the literature review that were specifically written from an occupational science perspective focus on a variety of different aspects of women's food occupations across a range of cultures and gives insight into changing cultures as well as strong adherence to long held beliefs and practices around food. However, as raised by one of the authors in later work, research within the world of occupational science could be said to have been influenced by a gender bias (Hocking 2012). The field of occupational science and occupational therapy research is dominated by predominantly white, female, middle class women and the focus of much occupational science research reflects the similar characteristics (Hammell 2011; Hocking 2012).

Whilst this study does fall into this 'trap' to a certain degree, the range of genders does at least move away a little from the female focus, additionally being able to include the experiences of a same sex couple, whose food occupations were divided between the couple in a way that was familiar to other heterosexual couple's experiences, this uncovering of their everyday experiences was the trigger to considering the gendering of food work occupations. This combined with the range of food occupations carried out by male participants and the avoidance or dislike of food occupations by some female participants, led to the sense that gender-stereotypes were disrupted.

Moving away from a cis-normative view of food occupations could provide a sense of freedom from judgement for some and could provide new opportunities and experiences for others. Changing the gendered discourse and expectations of older men and women in relation to food roles and what meaning food may have in their lives in connection with gender could enable people to talk openly about their experiences and what they want or need to be able to do in relation to food rather than what they think they should do dependent on their gender. Changing the discourse is a significant challenge and would require a seismic shift in the way food occupations are reflected in a multitude of different media (cookbooks, TV, social media, cooking courses aimed specifically at men or women and so on) as these all-pervasive carriers of the food gendered message are still gendering food occupations (Valentine 1999; Cairns et al 2010). Research is one way in which to make people question things and to try to influence change.

6.4   Belonging

Within this study the theme of Belonging considered participants' belonging within their current food lives and also times of belonging that are connected to past food experiences. This reflects the idea that the meaning people attribute to things (in this case food) is constructed through experiences throughout the life course (Holstein and Gubrium 2007). These experiences encompass social situations, cultural connections, family and nostalgic recollections of past roles which provides the building blocks for people to construct their 'food worlds' (Holstein and Gubrium 2007). Food can be intertwined with opportunities for social connectedness to family and friends as well as reinforcing a sense of belonging with cultures, places, values and traditions. The need for food is present every day of someone's life, its presence or absence marking different experiences, stages, and situations. This study has shown that food can anchor people to many different times of belonging or outsiderness. Findings would suggest that ensuring people have foods that give a sense of belonging both to different times and places can provide a sense of ease and rootedness. This sense of belonging is very important to physical and mental wellbeing (Hammell 2014).

This research showed a reciprocal shifting between food that generated memories, reminiscing about previous food experiences and current situations. Using photographs was both a memory prompt for recent food experiences but also triggered thoughts of the past, therefore, using photographs enhanced the depth of the data gathered. Food and food occupations are such an everyday experiences throughout life that they can provide a sense of belonging in different life stages as well as in different environments. The study demonstrated that eating foods in the present that anchor people to their past can be part of the person's sense of belonging now and then. Eating foods from the past can bring the past into the present and consciously recollect times of other belonging.

Having a sense of belonging is important for people's physical and mental wellbeing and has been reflected in previous studies yet can also be a challenging area to research as it can be embedded within everyday practices and harder to identify until there is a loss of belonging (Bennett 2014; Hammell 2014). Belonging is not a static state of being and can change as people age and go through different life stages (May 2018) and was observed in the present study for participants. In this research food and food occupations were always part of people's lives, providing a constant thread connecting different life stages. The type of food and amount of food may have varied but food was always there and could provide a sense of belonging,

In the present study there was a theme of food connecting to cultural experiences gained whilst studying, working or traveling overseas. This was spoken of with a strong sense of nostalgia and a sense of self developed through the new and different surroundings that they found themselves integrating within. The thread of these experiences can be seen stretching from past cultural experiences and integrating themselves into current food occupations. Food therefore being a means of maintaining and developing a sense of belonging in the past as well as the present. May and Muir (2015) suggest that whilst 'belonging' has often been focused on from the perspective of specific groups of people, often from a cultural perspective, it is also important to recognise how ageing can also have an impact on a person's sense of belonging (May and Muir 2015). In research considering older people's temporal

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experiences of belonging there was reference to how an older person may feel that their worlds are shrinking (for example through reduced mobility, sensory changes, bereavement) they may look back to times where they felt a strong sense of social belonging (May 2018).

6.4.1   Belonging: Temporality of Food Occupations

There were several participants within this study who had spent time working, studying or travelling overseas. Reflecting on stories of foods shared in different cultures and countries elicited nostalgic stories of belonging in a different time and place. These memories were a strong part of people's pasts and their present through the foods that were still eaten, the food occupations carried out and the stories that were told, connecting people to their previous experiences of belonging in a different time and place. Their experiences marking their journeys through life and leaving indelible impressions (Rowles 2008) as seen through their food occupations in later life, thus "…meaning becomes embedded in place..." (Rowles 2008, p. 129). Not everyone is able to travel or work overseas, socioeconomic reasons meaning people may have to prioritise other aspects of life or not have the required qualifications to apply for jobs that would enable them to travel. However, the opportunity for global travel and employment as well as study were part of the experiences discussed in this research. Additionally serving in the armed forces for National Service also resulted in time overseas.

In this study there was a sense of pride when looking back at the experiences of living, travelling, and working overseas and being accepted by different cultures. This was evident in the language used, for example reporting the number of countries travelled to as something that was sure to impress. However, it was discussion highlighting how, by accepting and enjoying the food given by local people, there was a sense of having belonged and of showing respect for the food cultures of those countries. Being viewed as someone who would consume things that perhaps other British people might not eat was seen as a badge of honour and of acceptance and belonging. This had been 'carried' into present culture. Photographs showing food items or crockery that had first been acquired, discovered, or learnt about overseas generating nostalgic

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stories of a busy time of life exploring the world and discovering a way to belong in other places. Retirement appeared to have brought about a lessening of these experiences, being grounded to some extent. Food occupations were therefore a way for people to stay connected with these different cultures. Using crockery that had connections with travelling and overseas work and cooking in ways learnt whilst in other countries were ways that people connected to previous places of belonging.

For women who talked about travelling, studying, or working overseas they were independently travelling at a time when it was less common for women to do this (Harris and Wilson 2007). Recollecting these cultural experiences could not only provide a sense of previous cultural belonging overseas but also a sense of belonging to a culture of independent women, empowered to overcome societal barriers, judgements, and expectations and with a strong sense of agency (Harris and Wilson 2007). Being able to connect with these past cultural experiences could support the continued sense of independence and agency despite any changes faced due to ageing. Respecting someone's previous experiences of adventure, independence and empowerment could be very important to how someone may accept support if it were needed.

Researchers looking at travel and food consumption have suggested that some food experienced overseas could be seen as being 'peak experiences,' creating strong memories through a rich sensory experience even if only experienced a single time (Quan and Wang 2004). Whilst there were certainly examples that could be considered peak experiences discussed within this study there were also experiences that spanned a much greater length of time overseas, not as tourists but living and belonging in a country as home. Bezzola and Lugosi (2018) recognise that travellers who spend longer periods of time in a country and therefore eat local food more frequently, can start to imbue that food with a sense of home and belonging. Eating local food can enable people to move outside of their personal cultural constructs and to gain a sense of belonging in this newfound culture. For travellers in these situations this was then seen to translate into nostalgic feelings of home for the food consumed overseas, food that had become 'home' (Tsai 2016; Bezzola and Lugosi 2018). This has strong echoes

with this study. Where people had spent considerable time overseas, eating local foods and learning local cooking techniques this became home, where they belonged. Now back in the UK and in much more static situations, food could provide nostalgic recollections and an anchor to times of belonging in different cultures. It also provided an active way to connect with their time overseas by recreating meals eaten overseas and using the cooking knowledge and techniques learnt that had now become part of their regular meal practices.

The word nostalgia is used within research to describe emotional longing for past experiences (Routledge et al. 2011). Studies examining the role that nostalgia plays in lives has shown that it can have positive impacts on physical and mental health and wellbeing including a sense of social connectedness and providing meaning (Routledge et al. 2011; Routledge et al. 2012; Sedikides and Wildschut 2018). By looking back over previous times of belonging and connections with different cultural experiences can turn attention away from thoughts of ageing and deterioration (Routledge et al. 2011). Using this sense of nostalgia combined with the assertion that people can belong in different times, temporal belonging, (May and Muir 2015) can raise another area that would be worthy of investigation with older people needing food support. If there are times where someone has positively experienced a particular sense of belonging which can be connected with or recreated through talking about and eating certain foods, this could provide a stronger sense of belonging albeit in a different time and place. In this study the cultural experiences of working and travelling overseas provided rich and strong memories of cultural experiences which produced a bank of stories to share and foods that were still eaten, all providing a way to maintain and reinforce a previous time of belonging.

> "…the human propensity for vicarious engagement in environments displaced in space and/or time means that the experience of place often transcends our immediate location (Rowles 1979)" (Rowles 2008, p.130)

Considering participants exposure to different types of foods through university education (both in the UK and overseas), travel, work or carrying out National Service overseas it could be suggested that these opportunities enabled participants to expand

their food horizons in a way that would not have been so easy had they remained within the UK. This 'gathering' of different cultural experiences over the life course could be viewed from the perspective of Bourdieu's (2010) work which considered how Cultural Capital is developed and how it can reinforce and reflect someone's social standing, their class. He proposed that food was one of the ways in which the upper classes distance themselves from the lower classes. In trying to understand and explain how these class divides are formed Bourdieu (2010) talked of Cultural Capital being gathered over a lifetime, seen as tastes in art, music, and food (Kamphuis et al. 2015). Bourdeiu's (1984) work is still discussed within current research literature (Kamphuis et al. 2015) though it must be remembered that his research was founded on French people in the 1960s (Germov and Williams 2013). The world has changed considerably since that time, however, participants within this study were young adults during this time, gaining education and work. Some participants in this study had experience of university level education, study abroad, progressive parents, a parent working overseas and bringing back different foods and experiences and independent travel overseas. All these experiences could add to an individual's Cultural Capital. It could be suggested that this was then observed in the range of foods eaten, discussed, and displayed in the images taken by participants. In turn this may reflect where they may view their position within society.

The experience of developing Cultural Capital through food and food occupations carried out in other countries may feel less relevant to current society given the ease of being able to get take-aways from a wide range of different cultures (Germov and Williams 2013). However, having access to an Indian Take Away is unlikely to equate to the same immersion in food culture as being in India eating food prepared locally or sharing food with a neighbour of Indian heritage. A takeaway is less likely to generate the 'peak experience' (Quan and Wang 2004) or develop a sense of belonging to a different time and place (Tsai 2016; Bezzola and Lugosi 2018). Participants who had opportunities to find out about different cultural foods either through travel or through being part of groups within their local environment, were able to be more involved with their food, thinking about how it was prepared, an opportunity for

questions that would add to the developing cultural capital and would influence their own food practices.

If someone's sense of belonging is, in part, constructed by 'introjecting' the food environments encountered when working, studying, and travelling overseas then this is integral to who someone is and their sense of temporal belonging. When working with older people needing support with food, gaining an understanding of these perspectives could help maintaining connections with their sense of belonging with their pasts. This temporal experience of belonging could provide significant ways in which to enable someone to maintain their sense of connectivity with themselves and the cultures that they have taken within themselves.

6.4.2   Belonging: Temporality of Food Occupations, Family food.

The photographs taken by participants in this study show gatherings with families for get-togethers and celebrations as well as items of crockery and cookware that were family heirlooms. Images could generate nostalgic memories of family situations relating to food, often comic tales of family food adventures, told with the expertise of a professional storyteller. Food, recipes, and physical objects were a visceral and sensory way to hold on to family and a way to pass family cultures and traditions to subsequent generations. Family food recollections could also generate negative memories relating to food, though these were talked about less frequently. Life course stages were discussed through food moments with family; from the early days of food negotiations as a married couple, eating with children as young families, through to passing on food knowledge as the children grew up and moved away and then couples moving into the retirement stage of their lives (Rudman 2012).

The timing of this study meant that some participants were taking photographs during the Christmas period. This resulted in a selection of images, described by the photographers as showing family gathering to cook Christmas dinner or round an extended dinner table. A kitchen full of people, busy, working together, purposeful and knowing what needed to be done. The sense of belonging to the assembled group being conveyed through images as well as words. Christmas and other festivals and

celebrations can be times where food is a central focus, bringing people together for preparation, sharing tasks, having different roles within the process and then sharing the food together too. The food itself can provide a deep sense of belonging but also artifacts used at that time of year for preparation and serving of food. It is also an opportunity to share traditions with the next generation. Food connecting with the past through the recreation of family favourites handed down from previous generations as well as food connecting with the future through passing on traditions to younger members of the family.

Family food culture relating to celebrations is something that has been explored in depth by Shordike and Pierce (2005), Wright-St Clair et al. (2005) and O'Sullivan et al. (2008). They explored women's roles in different cultural celebrations and identified how important it was for their participants to gather family together for food at these cultural markers in the calendar. The women in their studies wanting to ensure that everyone enjoyed the food presented at the table. Christmas was not specifically asked about in this current research therefore it was not discussed by all participants unless they were taking part in the study over the festive period. Discussions that did arise related to family gatherings and a sense of bringing everyone together.

Within the current research, whilst Christmas could certainly be seen as a time of togetherness and belonging for some, it did not necessarily come without tensions for others. The pressure of cooking for large numbers was not something always enjoyed, the need to fulfil older generations' expectations of what should be served at the Christmas table adding to the challenges. The power of a shared meal occasion for a family could also be reflected upon when it is used to indicate disapproval, withholding an invite to join because someone's lifestyle does not meet Christian cultural expectations held by other family members. This act showing exclusion rather than inclusion. Therefore, whilst shared family food traditions and celebratory food occasions could provide a sense of belonging for some, it could result in a feeling of 'outsiderness' for others, of not belonging.

The role of a parent in passing on food traditions to children was valued within the current research. This was discussed from both the perspective of someone receiving traditions as well as passing them on. Mothers in families appeared to be the main conveyors of family kitchen culture, however, shared food experiences with fathers were also highlighted as moments of togetherness. A father and son bonding over cooking attempts or the pride in seeing an adult child following in the footsteps with their food choices and cooking skills. The nostalgic way in which people may talk about foods shared with parents and siblings transporting them back to those moments of belonging as a child within a family. Actively preparing food with members of the next generation is a participatory way for families to pass down their own cultures and foods (Beagan and D'Sylva 2011). Within the current research it was observed that recreating foods from childhood will not necessarily result in them tasting the same, a potential frustration for following generations and perhaps an indication that there is more to the experience of eating food cooked by a parent, things that can never be replicated unless that person were there cooking the item themselves.

Food and connections with family past and present can be a strong presence in people's lives as was seen within this study. Carrying out traditions and rituals to honour those who have died can be seen in cultures across the globe (Hammell 2014) and people can use food to honour those who have been important. By continuing to cook foods previously prepared by a mother or father or use a piece of kitchen equipment or cutlery originally used by the person can all be ways in which identity can be honoured and were ways reported in this study. An added way to ensure that these family cultural traditions were continued was to teach the next generation or to pass on different cooking items. Capturing memories and sharing memories through food occupations and using food as a means of keeping those important people 'alive' for themselves and future generations. The role of cooking equipment as part of shared family culture and heritage has been recognised in previous studies (Beagan and D'Sylva 2011; Peoples et al. 2017) work where they similarly found that the women in their study reported that cooking utensils had fond memories of previous family times. The phrase "belonging through artifacts" being referred to by Peoples et al. (2017) who identified that this could enable people to feel a temporal sense of

belonging. Meah and Jackson (2015) also consider the role of the kitchen in being a link to the past and a 'museum' for cooking tools, recipes and all associated items. Kitchens playing a role in being a physical way to reflect people's identities and curate family food histories (Meah and Jackson 2015).

Cultural food traditions within families can provide a sense of security and belonging as seen within this study. Reflections on past experiences can provide temporal belonging and continuing to use recipes and cooking equipment connects different times, places, and people together to form a strong bond of belonging within that family structure. When someone is no longer able to carry out these traditions it could be important for them to be able to talk about them or to use different ways to show what the traditions were and how they were carried out. There may not be people they can pass the traditions on to but it could still be a very important aspect of their lives that they would want other people to share in.

If older people needing food support are unable to have the food they would have cooked for themselves this could lead to a sense of not belonging in their current worlds. Their food choices, the way they have the food on the plate, the connections with crockery and cutlery that facilitate a sense of belonging and ease. The dislocation from this sense of ease of belonging can impact on sense of self. Conversely however May (2011) raises the consideration that sometimes being in a situation of 'not belonging' can open new possibilities, new options and new ways of doing things. Rather than maintaining the status quo, the static state where someone feels that they belong, the routines and family habits of food times, changing this could enable older people to discover new ways of doing things and it could be a chance to relinquish the roles that have bound people to belonging within family cultures.

6.4.3   Belonging with and belonging within: Eating in the company of others

In the present study there were multiple ways in which social connections were created and sustained by food. Food could be the central focus, the 'end goal' of being with others or it could be the means, the conduit for meeting, connecting people over sharing a food and social experience. Through reflecting on the photographs that were

taken, images of food triggered participants to talk about social connections and times of belonging both in the present and the past. Commensality, the experience of eating with others, was something experienced in different ways in the current study, this could be eating with a partner, family or friends, at home or restaurants, clubs and societies. The effort of continuing social eating in this research was observed as important as people got older. Viewed as something that ensured maintenance of social and cognitive abilities and also maintenance of 'standards.

Both older men and women in this study talked about enjoying eating with others. Previous research looking at loss of commensality has more frequently focused on women's response to loss of a partner or changes to social eating opportunities (Sidenvall et al 2000; Nyberg et al 2016; Saeed et al 2020). However, the enjoyment of social eating was not attributable specifically to one gender or the other. The need for social connections was present regardless of gender and within the current study was raised, by both male and female participants, as important to continue into older age.

Social connections through attendance at different groups involved food in different ways as observed in this study. When attending lunch clubs, where food provision was the central focus, participants spoke of their involvement from the perspective of being contributors first and foremost, helping others, as opposed to needing to attend to have a meal and be reliant on care. It was through the active participation in helping that the sense of belonging was conveyed. The importance of actively contributing to something, or having a purpose, has been shown to be part of what older people see as important for healthy ageing (Bryant et al. 2001; Carr and Weir 2017; Pack et al. 2019). There was a sense of 'othering' of the people who were viewed as needing to attend a lunch club. This was reflected in language used which highlighted how old the other attendees were (the suggestion being they were much older than those commenting) and the range of sensory and mobility impairments that were experienced by them (another way in which age and decrepitude were indicated). This may have been more explicitly discussed due to having the photographs to refer to and deciding to explain the background of each person in the image and their differing needs. However, the 'othering' of people needing to attend the lunch club does echo

findings of Pack et al.'s (2019) research exploring people's ways of managing the ageing process. They identified that one of the ways in which older people tried to have a sense of positive ageing was to distance themselves from older people who they saw as passive or inactive. In this instance it is suggested that the main attendees at the lunch clubs were passive recipients of care as opposed to the active, engaged older people attending in the capacity of being the ones provided the care. In addition to the sense of purpose and contribution, other attractions of attending the groups were the opportunity to hear speakers and contribute to charitable collections. Showing an active interest in learning and also of contributing to those in need outside of the local community.

The findings in this current research reflect previous studies (Kharicha et al. 2017; Saeed et al. 2019,) which specifically explored people's motivation to attend lunch clubs. It was identified that having another aspect in addition to the food could encourage participation, things such as educational talks. Food can be an enticement to join when the focus is on something else but 'Lunch Clubs' per se could be seen to carry somewhat ageist connotations, the image of older people who need help, charity, and loss of agency. Rather than an active and engaged group interested in the activity or topic of the occasion who then also join together to eat as part of this scenario (Kharicha et al. 2017; Saeed et al. 2019). In the current research, being able to actively contribute to the lunch clubs enabled people to maintain aspects of their social identity through the social connections, contributing to the meal through different means and having a sense of supporting others, of doing something meaningful

Sharing food and eating occasions has been something seen as more of a concern to women due to a perceived caring and nurturing nature (Sidenvall et al. 2000; Nyberg et al. 2016; Saeed et al. 2019). However, in this study both male and female participants discussed the enjoyment of sharing food with others and how it can be one of the ways to keep active and engaged in older age. The importance of friendships, supporting others and of maintaining an active mind as well as an active

body was recognised, and food was often a conduit for meeting and for talking with others.

External factors were seen to impact on people's social eating opportunities within this research. For example changes to local environments, gentrification of the village pub to a gastro pub making the original drinkers feel out of place, creating a sense of being an outsider when once it would have been a place to socialise and relax. Torres (2020) also recognised the challenges for older people when a local area finds itself experiencing an influx of younger people and local establishments changing their trade to attract these new consumers. This can make it increasingly challenging to 'age in place' if changes within the local environment make people feel that they no longer belong and their options for acquiring food are reducing with closures and re-purposing of previous food venues (Torres 2020). An awareness that there can be a loss of social eating opportunities (and its potential impact on the desire to eat) due to age related changes could create motivation to maintain social circles with food being a good way to engage with others. It was also a motivator to ensure friends and family, who may have lost or be at risk of losing social eating opportunities, were included, or invited to join others for food and drink, whether this be tea and a biscuit or a full meal (Host et al. 2016b; Bjornwall et al. 2021). There was a sense of belonging to a generation that will face loss and that there is a need to support others where this has already happened. Actively supporting others through food. The importance of social engagement for 'successful ageing' was highlighted in Carr and Weir's (2017) study. Whilst social engagement can encompass a range of different activities, meeting for a shared food occasion was one way in which participants in this research were seen to maintain social engagement. Carr and Weir (2017) discussed the importance that people saw in engaging in social activities for maintaining cognitive stimulation which would support successful ageing. Forsman et al. (2013) showed similar findings and also added that social engagement also gave people something to look forward to, providing a sense of hope and of things happening in the future. Again, this was echoed in the current research. The importance of enabling continued social eating opportunities, where people feel comfortable meeting and eating, can support people

to maintain their identities as engaged and active older people who still have busy lives (Host et al. 2016b; Bjornwall et al. 2021).

Even at events that were organised for a purpose other than food, food still featured, often as a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits, facilitating social aspects of the occasion. Groups which were gathered for entirely non-food related reasons, such as a book club or conservation work, would stop for an 'interval' for what seemed an almost obligatory cup of tea (or coffee) and a biscuit. There was a sense that this was an expected part of meeting with others. The pause in proceedings giving a chance to talk with fellow group members about different things, to share a moment in time together. Making attendees feel valued and welcome as well as respecting the unspoken 'rules' of how to host a group all appeared to reinforce the sense of belonging.

There appear to be limited studies specifically considering the importance of 'a cup of tea and a biscuit' to social situations and belonging. Reference to such refreshments as being expected at social gatherings was noted in a study by Kharicha et al. (2017) when seeking people's views on groups designed to tackle loneliness could be addressed in the community, tea and biscuits were expected when gathering for a social situation and is a simple way to extend a gesture of welcome and inclusion. It was equally important for people moving into residential care to still be able to offer visitors a cup of tea and a biscuit in Lovatt's (2018) study and it is noted in studies by Birken and Bryant (2019) that, in group sessions, tea brought a sense of home to people within an inpatient acute mental health setting. Similarly, a cup of tea and a biscuit gave a relaxed and informal feeling and in a discussion piece by Joshua Fletcher (2020) who, having trained as a doctor, reflected on his earlier years working as a carer. He considered how sometimes making someone a cup of tea provided more 'medicine' than the medication someone was taking (Fletcher 2020). A cup of tea is so ubiquitous in the UK that perhaps it is not given the level of respect it deserves. In this study the humble cup of tea is the quiet facilitator at social gatherings. There were many different settings and occasions in which the mug or cup of tea or coffee appeared but it was pervasive amongst the participants' photographs and discussions as something

that belonged in their daily lives and that consequently could create a sense of belonging.

The repeated use of tea or coffee in social situations within the findings of this study would indicate that it is important to notice these comparatively small and simple moments. Making a cup of tea and taking a pause in time to talk is, in many ways, an easy action to make someone feel that they belong. Knowing whether someone likes a cup of tea or coffee, how they have it and what they prefer to drink from can be part of the 'armoury' of ways to include someone in a social situation or to create a social situation. For someone who is reliant on care visiting them at home, being able to have a social cup of tea together could provide much more than just refreshment. This however also needs the gift of time, whilst making and drinking a cup of tea is not necessarily a time-consuming task, if it must be prioritised amongst many other priorities that carers have to manage in their jobs, it could be a challenge to raise it to the same status as personal care and giving medication. Yet, it could be more valuable to someone's wellbeing and sense of belonging with other human beings.

However social eating situations not only included eating directly with people who were known or at least regularly associated with at clubs and societies. Eating within social situations could also mean eating alone but in a busy environment, eating amongst other people in regularly frequented cafes. Still feeling a sense of belonging from being in a familiar environment and somewhere where there may be familiar faces passing by but also just belonging in the world, belonging in a busy environment with the hustle and bustle of everyone getting on with their lives. The study of people dining out alone is however something less examined and as identified by Goode (2018) eating out is designed around the idea that someone will be eating with at least one other person (consider the seating layouts for example) and there is very little written about older women eating alone (Lahad and May 2017; Goode 2018). Gender here again being briefly touched upon from the perspective of older women eating alone potentially being judged as 'spinsters' whereas older men going to the pub alone being seen as more accepted practice (Lahad and May 2017). In this study again gender did not appear to be a factor in the eating out situations. A sense of belonging

in and to the eating establishment however was important to make it feel a comfortable and familiar place to eat solo. Eating out alone, however, in this study, was as valued an experience to those participants as the descriptions of eating with others in cafés and restaurants.

Eating alone in social situations as an older person is an area that would benefit from deeper investigation. There has been an increase in solo eating in society due to the increase in people living alone (Yates and Warde 2017) and whilst initial considerations of this topic may engender thoughts of loneliness this may not always be the. Understanding what can make a solo eating event imbued with a sense of fulfilment and belonging could create new ways to address situations where people no longer have sociable eating opportunities or where this has perhaps always been part of their identity, having previously enjoyed eating alone but in a busy environment (Bjornwall et al. 2021). Enabling someone to have a sense of connection with the world outside the home, a connection with the business of life, could be very important where someone has lost this connection.

Current discourse tends to create an image of the older solo diner as someone who is lonely, who has lost company and where it is part of an ageing, shrinking world surrounded by loss however, bringing a new perspective to this and drawing on emerging research considering the culture of solo dining could create new and innovative ways to enable people to still have a sense of belonging when eating alone. Kopanen and Mustonen (2020) propose that solo dining can in fact hold the potential for more commensality than couples eating silently together. Solo diners may converse with staff and fellow diners developing commensality and a sense of belonging (Goode 2018; Kopanen and Mustonen 2020). This is redolent of findings in this study and also of the person discussed in the Background Chapter (Chapter 2, Section 2.2 page 9) who took great delight in eating a single sausage in a supermarket café, not so much for the food but for the company of the staff and fellow shoppers.

As with the continued theme of this study, there were many ways in which people used food as part of connecting socially. Participants in this study spoke, to differing

degrees, of the benefits of eating together for a variety of reasons including social, physical and cognitive benefits. Reducing social isolation has been another use of shared meal opportunities as seen in previous studies as well as making people feel included and valued (Martin 2005; Bisogni et al. 2007; Beagan et al. 2011; Forsman et al. 2013). Being able to find ways to ensure continued consumption of food takes resilience and problem-solving skills to think about how to overcome changes that have been faced (Vesnaver et al. 2012). The importance of being able to maintain social connections as a way to promote active and successful ageing has been noted in previous studies (Stenner et al. 2010; Forsman et al. 2013; Boudiny 2013;). Stenner et al. (2010) discuss how growing older was associated with passivity for the participants within their study therefore maintaining an active social life can be an important part of ageing positively and as seen in this current research, food can facilitate active social engagement with family and friends.

6.5   Everyday food: The bread and butter of food occupations

The older people participating in this study talked about their day-to-day food experiences which were varied and individual to each person. Food preferences, choices, attitudes, values, and beliefs reflected aspects of their identities, what they held as important to them when it came to their everyday food lives. Findings from the current research will be explored to gain a deeper understanding of the role that food plays in relation to older people's identities and how the meanings that food does or does not hold for people, can reinforce identity. These understandings will be reviewed considering previous work about the role of food related to people's identities. This will enable new insights to be highlighted as well as understanding where the current study reinforces previous research.

Identity has been described as created through the things people do, their interests, activities, their occupations (Guptill et al. 2017) and food can be part of any or all of these areas. In this research it was recognised that food can be an integral part of an older person's identity, who they have been and who they want to continue being. Identities relating to food appear to be something that remained mainly unchanged

throughout people's lives, the current research being congruent with previous work carried out by Plastow et al. (2015b) who recognised that food identities tended to remain fairly static. The process of making food choices can provide everyday opportunities to enact values and beliefs enabling someone to reinforce their identity both to themselves as well as reflecting this identity outwards to their social world (Guptill et al. 2017). The current research demonstrated how food related roles and routines can be a vehicle for creating, reflecting, maintaining, and reinforcing identity. This demonstrated the importance of food within a person's life is different for every individual. The meaning of food and food occupations for individuals cannot be ascribed for them, it must be understood from their perspective and within the different contexts that they experience food (Hammell 2004). Activities that are meaningful to an individual can provide a sense of value and purpose (Hammell 2004). Actively engaging in food occupations can be meaningful for people, connecting them to their identities and providing a sense of self.

6.5.1   Food Choices

In Rowles (2008) work he outlines four 'Domains and Trajectories of Meaning' which change over the life course, with a central core of 'being'. The example given is that as someone ages the core importance of 'being' increases as does the requirement for choice. Food choices have also been identified as being developed in childhood though still being potentially influenced throughout life through different 'events' such as having children or getting married (Host et al. 2016a).

The current research demonstrated that choosing what food to eat and where to acquire food, are food choices providing an opportunity for people to overtly action their values and beliefs, however, it is a rather utopian view to think that choice of foods is entirely down to 'free will' as societal constructs surround these choices (Rowles 2008). People within this study, as established in section 6.2.3, were born in between the years just before the second world war and into the years just after the war's conclusion. A time of continued rationing but then a time of;

"...economic growth, rising incomes, a diminished propensity to save and a changing quality and quantity of life..." (Warde 2015, p.119)

A developing world of the individual, of opportunity and consumerism and of neoliberalism surrounded developing cultures of 'choice' (Warde 2015). This was at a time when the participants of this study were working, raising families, and traveling overseas. These experiences of more austere times followed by the potential for purchasing power and increased choice could influence attitudes and approaches to food purchasing and the notion of needing and wanting choice in older age. Whether people are then able to enact this desire for choice is of course influenced and shaped by current finances.

Food choices that were spoken about in this study were made throughout the day, every day, providing repeated occasions for identity to be reinforced and reflected to others. Having choice of foods was seen to be important for some older people in this current study and something that they want to continue to be able to have autonomy over. Where food is a central part of someone's identity, being able to continue to make choices and decisions about food is something that they hold as very important, to continue to reflect and enact their identity in a socially constructed world (Warde 2015). Whereas people who do not see food as particularly important to them and their identity, the choice they may want to make, is to hand over food tasks to someone else. This is an equally important aspect of choice that older people may want to make though one that may or may not feel acceptable within society, thinking particularly back to the discussion on gendering of food occupations and potential acceptance or otherwise of people's choices about whether to eat ready meals, cook from scratch or avoid cooking entirely.

Older people have had years to develop their food preferences and choices and throughout their lives they may have been faced with making negotiations relating to food (Sobal and Bisogni 2009). Examples of these negotiations at different ages can be seen in other studies. For the teenagers in Stead et al.'s (2011) study, food was part of negotiating image, judgments of others and fitting in with peer groups. For the mothers in the research by Johnson et al. (2011) there was a conflict sometimes

between trying to establish healthy eating identities for their children alongside their own food choices which were not always congruent with eating healthy foods. The adult 'picky eaters' of Thompson et al.'s (2015) had to negotiate several challenging food situations to have the food they wanted whilst also managing the emotional and physical impact that being 'picky' had on their identities. In this research, older people were seen to be settled in their food identities without much, if any, real change throughout their lives. However, negotiations within daily food activities still took place, for example, negotiating between foods of preferences versus foods for health, restraint from foods that might cause weight gain versus enjoying a treat.

As seen within this research, there was value placed on knowing the origins, quality, freshness, and any ethical considerations for the food purchased and consumed. The importance of ethical food choices is recognised in earlier literature (Connors et al. 2001; Sobal and Bisogni 2009) where ethics is identified as one of the elements of people's personal food choices. The ethical food choices of older people has been seen to be part of the decision making process for older consumers, upholding their beliefs relating to animal welfare and reduced environmental impact from waste (Carrigan et al. 2004). It is suggested that the lack of focus on ethical considerations of older consumers can, in turn, give a sense that they are not valued and consequently can impact people's sense of identity (Carrigan et al. 2004). Whilst the studies referred to were published several years ago, the findings from the current research show that ethical considerations are part of some older people's decisions when choosing what to buy and eat, reflecting their values and beliefs and being an important part of their identity. It again also reflects certain characteristics and values to society, upholding the social and economic standing that someone may have spent years constructing and wishes to maintain (Warde 2015).

The importance of fresh, quality foods that are full of taste was a common theme identified in this research. Home-cooked food was highly valued from various perspectives; conveying a sense of being valued, an opportunity to demonstrate cooking skills, knowledge and ability and an opportunity for creativity. Home-cooked, fresh foods were the optimal meal experience, where the ingredients had been

purposively selected, the method of preparation known, and all ingredients had been controlled. In contrast ready meals (as pre-packaged, ready cooked foods) could be viewed as the antithesis.

In previous research there are several references to the importance of fresh, home cooked food to older people and a preference for these over ready meals. (Sidenvall et al. 2001; Lumbers and Raats 2006; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Delaney and McCarthy 2011; Edfors and Westergren 2012). Since these studies were conducted several years ago, there are a wider range of ready-meals available now, however, in this research, opinions were still aligned to the same principles of preferring to have control over the food consumed by making it from scratch. A more recent study which specifically focused on older people's acceptance of convenience foods (including ready-meals) also had very similar findings (Peura-Kapanen et al. 2017). This research reflected similar attitudes towards pre-prepared, packaged meals and in addition to people's suspicion about the contents, there were also concerns about the environmental impact of individually packaged meals in single use plastic, something that was also raised as a concern in this research.

Understanding older people's views and preferences in relation to food choice is important when considering the types of provision available for older people needing support (Host et al. 2016b). As referenced in the Background (Chapter Two) there is a drive for people's individual preferences to be heard and addressed within social care provision. This research reinforces how people can have varying and strongly held views about many aspects of their daily food and this, for some, is a central part of their identity. However, pre-packaged meals are one of the ways that older people's food needs may be addressed as it can be challenging for carers to have time to purchase and cook meals that would meet all the different personal requirements for everyone (Watkinson-Powell et al. 2014). If someone values the autonomy of selecting, buying and cooking tasty meals meeting their standards of quality and ethical sourcing, then being offered a ready meal, something which has previously only been used for convenience, then this could have a significant impact on identity and

sense of self as all the key opportunities for autonomy and interaction with food will have been diminished.

Food decisions are made daily through individual negotiations considering what to eat or not to eat but these choices are not necessarily an overt, conscious, step-by-step processes (Sobal and Bisogni 2009). Through conversation and in this instance, through the use of photographs, deeper insights into personal values shaping food choices were revealed. As discussed in Chapter Four, (Methods), one of the reasons for using photo-elicitation is its potential for revealing aspects of everyday activities that someone may not ordinarily think to mention because it is commonplace, something they see or experience every day. Using photographs enabled participants to remember elements that they may not otherwise have thought of and therefore could discuss nuances of their experiences.

Choice relating to food is not only about the food itself but also about where to acquire foods. Having agency and autonomy over food purchasing was another area of importance for some participants. Buying food from smaller independent shops and local retailers gave an opportunity to be connected and invested in the local community, showing support for retailers in the local area. Shopping purposively in supermarkets either because they offered value for money, or the desired quality of produce were reasons why people chose to spend time going to different stores. Different supermarkets also held the potential for inspiring new food ideas and stocking more unusual items. However, when food is not so central to someone's identity supermarkets could feel overwhelming, too many choices, too big and too busy, making them places to avoid. People's food identities were therefore reflected in their preference for where to shop and whether they were motivated by the task.

Food shopping habits among older people has been a source of interest in previous research. This is both from a marketing perspective as well as health and wellbeing context (Lumbers and Raats 2006; Wills et al. 2016b). For the small number of studies examining the food practices of independent community dwelling older people, previous research supports the findings in this study in terms of people's desire to go

to a range of shops to get what they wanted. Older people demonstrating that they needed and wanted choice relating to food (Host et al. 2016a; King et al. 2017).

Considering the range of places that older people may choose to get their food from, as seen in this study, and considering the potential challenges that can arise as people age (Lumbers and Raats 2006; Wills et al. 2016b) it is possible to see how people's identities could be incrementally impacted through age related changes to physical and sensory abilities. Recommendations for alterations to shops in terms of quieter shopping times and easier to use trolleys (Wills et al. 2016b) are seen as possible interventions to make the activity less fatiguing and physically demanding.

Being able to actively make choices about where to purchase different foods was important to participants in this study though it relied on being able to travel to the shop, negotiate the shopping environment and get the food home successfully. This study focused on individuals who were managing independently (or co-dependently) and had no reported difficulties accessing shops therefore it was still an opportunity to exert preferences, maintain routines and make deliberate purchasing choices. Maintenance of shopping trips was also seen as priority for some of the older women in Lane et al.'s (2014) study. When they were no longer actively cooking their meals, they relinquished that aspect of control over their food but continued to exert their autonomy by doing the shopping (or being supported to do it) therefore still controlling the food that they were eating. Supermarkets are one of the main sources of every day food purchasing for older adults (Omar et al. 2014) however, as identified in the current research, having access to local producers and small independent businesses also provides the potential for different food items to be selected and another way in which to buy food in accordance with beliefs around ethical purchasing, being part of the local community and supporting local trade (McEachern et al. 2010).

The interest that some older people may have in the contents of their food and the desire to choose ingredients and control where it is from, reflects people who are actively engaged with the world around them. People who are knowledgeable and

discerning and with values and beliefs about the origins and content of their food. This is a very different picture to the stereotyped images of older people as no longer so competent and unable to learn new information (Swift et al. 2017). It is however more reflective of studies showing that older people highly rate the importance of remaining active, carrying out meaningful tasks and being able to manage daily tasks independently (Leeuwen et al. 2019). The findings from the current research should, however, be considered in light of why participants took part in the study. It is possible that people were motivated to volunteer because they already had an interest in food. This in turn could mean that more participants were going to be people who cooked food from scratch and actively engage with different food related tasks.

Participants in this research adjusted over the years to different life demands such as growing families, marriage and work changes but remained strongly tied to their pleasure or function approach to food. Research studying the maintenance of food identities throughout the life course has reported that there were no significant changes to people's food choices. As was found in this research, there are adjustments to different events in life such as work and motherhood, but major changes are more related to situations where people have had significant life events such as loss of a partner (Bisogni et al. 2002; Devine 2005; Plastow et al. 2015b). Previous research suggests that the main change in people's food identities, as they grow up and age, is the range of food that they eat (Bisogni et al. 2002) which again was reflected by participants in this study.

A person's social identity can be reflected through food. One way that this was observed in this research was when someone discussed their opinions about what other people ate or judged their own food consumption. Perceptions of other people's eating practices, in this research, could result in judgements being made, such as people being seen as 'picky' or 'fussy', and food intolerances and allergies could be viewed sceptically or with a degree or pity.   Being grateful for being given food was the approved response and 'fussiness' was seen of as possible ingratitude. Experiences developed and consolidated through life could lead people to judge others. For example, in this research, rationing during the second world war meant knowing what

it was like to not have the foods desired or the quality of food. Additionally, working in places where food was very different led to an attitude of eating anything and being grateful for it. When someone has an identity strongly connected with food, they can be very knowledgeable about food and food practices. Taking a deep interest in everything to do with food can mean reading about it, learning new ways to cook, trying different foods, being open to food experiences and wanting others to share the same interest and openness to food. This may make it challenging for someone with a strong food identity to accept or understand that someone else may be the expert in what they want, or can, eat. It may also lead to frustration at not being able to share food in the same way with someone.

It was also found in this research that people judged their own food consumption. Photographs taken by an individual were reflected upon and judged from perspectives of health, weight or what someone felt would be accepted in the eyes of society. It appeared that food or drink that may be judged by others was not hidden from being photographed but looking at the images after the event led to discussion about the items, revealing further aspects of identity. People striving to be restrained in the face of tempting foods such as cakes, still showed pictures of sweet foods. Equally, images of alcohol may be prefaced with comments of guilt about drinking alone and thoughts about how this would be judged by society. It is difficult to know whether people would have openly talked about these different things if they had not had the photographs in the interview, but it potentially triggered conversation about aspects that may have been avoided by someone if they did not feel like mentioning it on the day. Participants did not have to talk about the photographs that generated these discussions but there was perhaps a need to explain why different foods were consumed, thus revealing more about judgements of others and of themselves.

Restraint in food consumption was something deemed to be a virtuous attribute for some participants within this study. It reflects of someone with strong self-control and as highlighted by Delaney and McCarthy (2014) this can be seen within Christian cultures as trying to remain free from the sinful traits of gluttony and consequently showing strong moral foundations on food consumption. Delaney and McCarthy

(2014) recognise that the Public Health discourse relating to healthy food guidance is the predominant force within society however reflect that there are still roots within the older morals of not being gluttonous. Studies discussing moral judgment of others' food choices (Bisogni et al. 2002; Blane et al. 2003; Delaney and McCarthy 2014) considered this from the perspective of people who deemed themselves to be 'healthy eaters' passing judgement on the health content of others' foods. This was not so overt in the current research and more prominent judgement made of others focused on people being grateful for the food given and not being 'picky'.

As discussed by Uhlmann et al. (2015) in their exploration of how people may form moral judgements, there is a developing foundation of literature that demonstrates how people have a fundamental need to make moral judgements of others. These judgements can often be founded on very little evidence. People may judge other's actions or use rules as a framework in which to view other's behaviours (Uhlmann et al 2015). There is also the suggestion that whilst people may be observing the behaviour of another person, they do not label the behaviour as good or bad, healthy or unhealthy, they instead label the person. Uhlmann et al. 2015 describe this as 'person-centred moral judgement' as opposed to 'act-centred' moral judgement.

Applying this to the judgements made about people's food consumption in this research, people's consumption or rejection of different foods leads them to be judged by others as indulgent or fussy. However, people's judgements about other's food eating practices could in itself be viewed through the lens of consequential ethics; by someone judging someone else' food intolerances as not existing and thus feed them foods that may cause them to be unwell, there are potentially very negative consequences of this. Deontological ethics could also be applied in relation to food and food actions as a result of judging others. Deontological ethics means doing the right thing, it is not specifically about the consequences of actions but having a duty to act correctly, therefore, applied to the discussion in this research, providing people with food that does not impact any intolerances could be seen as doing the right thing. Judgments were also made within this research about parents not feeding their children with food that were deemed to be healthy; in this instance people are judging

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others as not acting in the way that is right, they are not following deontological ethical practice. In this research, judgments of other's were expressed, some more strongly than others.

This study showed different examples of the moral judgements people made about themselves and about others. When thinking about this from the context of supporting older people with food, there could be a moral obligation (as seen through deontological ethics) to provide others with healthy, nutritional food in the same way as parents were viewed as being responsible for feeding their children healthy foods. This may ensure appropriate nutritional intake, but it may not always meet the recipient's personal food desires. Someone accepting food support may not want to be judged ungrateful or unhealthy therefore accepting food. In this research there was also value placed on being someone who eats anything. Maintaining a food identity of being accepting and unfussy in the eyes of others could lead to acceptance of undesired foods and therefore other aspects of food identity could be diminished.

In this research, one life event that was seen to have an impact on food consumption (as the foods eaten as opposed to food identity being the importance of food and food related activities to the person) was a change to health or physical changes often associated with ageing such as the requirement for dentures and development of Type 2 Diabetes. Dentures and diabetes are of course two very different ways in which physical change can alter eating. Someone's food identity can impact on how such changes are managed (Plastow et al. 2015). For people who have a strong food identity it could be felt more keenly when they have to alter the food they eat due to a health change, however, as was seen within this research it can also equip them with the motivation to find ways to still enjoy their food as much as possible.

Enjoying a wide range of foods can mean that someone can continue to maintain their identity as someone who enjoys foods but reduce or avoid ones that could be problematic as they have the skills and knowledge to think of alternatives. Type 2 Diabetes management requires adherence to dietary guidelines, however, ultimately it is the individual who must enact these, making changes to dietary intake and making

changes to an established part of life. As was seen in this research, having agency to assert control and make choices over how these changes are going to be carried out can on the one hand mean a successful change to diet, but it can also mean that people will make the guidelines work for them, continuing to eat foods that they enjoy but that are not recommended.

People's ability to feel that they can make changes to their lives can depend on their levels of self-efficacy (Vesnaver et al. 2012), having a sense of control over their lives enabling them to incorporate the food changes they want to, rejecting others and enjoying things that they feel are important to them. Previous research has highlighted ways in which older people may try to manage changes to independence relating to food. their ability to manage food independently, negotiating between things they were willing to stop doing and things they can do differently. Participants in Nyberg et al.'s (2016) study who were managing motoric changes in their food consumption were noted to adapt, to alter the way they did things so as to be able to continue with their routines and retain some sense of normality. Gustafsson et al. (2003), Mattsson Sydner et al. (2007) and Nyberg et al. (2016) also found that the participants in their studies tended to adapt their food tasks to be able to continue with as much independence as possible. Lane et al. (2014) studies the changing ways in which women interacted with food in older age and identified that the women would adapt their practices in different ways to overcome different health challenges, there is a continued sense of agency in these adaptations as something that the participants have actively actioned themselves. Whilst the participants in Host et al.'s (2016b) study were active community living older people who were determined to maintain as much independence as possible through being aware of what they were eating, health benefits and staying active.

People make 'value negotiations' when deciding what to eat (Sobal and Bisogni 2009). People may negotiate between a variety of competing values; taste, health, cost, quality, and enjoyment and deciding whether health needs outweigh the desire for the more indulgent food item (for example) may take much consideration or may be a swift decision to make depending on what is valued more highly at that point in time

(Sobal and Bisogni 2009). When these values are so tightly enmeshed with people's identity the negotiations could become particularly challenging when it means someone's identity is being challenged and this in turn could impact on someone's ability to adapt to changes in food intake due to something like diabetes.

The value negotiations carried out by participants in this research when conscious of potential weight gain can be accompanied by varying levels of guilt, and this is something that has also been noted in previous studies (Connors et al. 2001; Sobal and Bisogni 2009). Managing to exert enough restraint to have the healthier option, the smaller portion or resist one extra slice, may be easier for some than others and people who identify as someone who has a sweet tooth, for example, may find themselves needing to exert more self-restraint in the face of a packet of biscuits. Managing to meet personal intentions of healthy eating can give and reflect an increased sense of self-efficacy (Plastow et al. 2015) adding to their identity as a person of restraint and control and reducing the guilt that accompanies situations where the ideal has not been met (Bisogni et al. 2002). Delaney and McCarthy (2011) discuss participants talking about the struggle to resist treats and that trying to keep treats to specific special occasions was more about people becoming health conscious over the years as opposed to any financial constraints which may have been more the case in their past.

6.5.2 Routines

In this research eating routines were often habitual, socially constructed and culturally fitting 'the norm' of three meals a day eaten as breakfast, lunch, and dinner (Holm 2016; Yates and Warde 2017). There were however different timings associated with different meal occasions. Some meals being routinely timed, providing a predictability in both when food would be eaten as well as what food would be eaten. In addition to providing a potential structure, in this research food was also seen to provide an opportunity to pause, a moment to stop in the day and reflect. Retiring from work was a chance to establish new food routines or, as was also seen in this research, to develop routines when working life meant that things were always changing. This could be spoken of with a sense of freedom, laying in in the morning with no sense of

urgency to rush to work for example. However, people may also find the change from a busy working life with few food routines, to a settled life with predictability, is a negative situation. Routine may give comfort in its predictability or may be needed because health and medication guide eating times.

However, there may be a desire to choose 'last minute' what to eat and when to eat it, to embrace the relative 'freedom' from the daily work routines and adopt new and varied patterns of eating. Having been born at a time of relative austerity, then lived through food occupations structured by family routines, work, societal 'norms' of the time (e.g.: Sunday roast being typical), older people now find themselves in an age where food can be acquired at any time of day or night if money and geographical location allow access, there are different ways in which people interact with food and the need for quick options for time-poor people. There may be aspects of this that are appealing to people who find themselves no longer having to adhere to daily work patterns (Yates and Warde 2017). Yates and Warde (2017) identify that in the 1950s (when participants in this study were young adults or older children) there was more definition between weekdays and weekends as society reflected a more religious observance of a day of rest. Shops were not open 24 hours a day and certainly not on a Sunday whereas now, older people find themselves in a society that is always on the go and always open (Yates and Warde 2017). Routines could feel disrupted, or it could be embraced for the new opportunities to create new patterns of living in retirement. Holm (2016) suggested that changes in eating patterns that are socially constructed (eg: three meals a day as breakfast, lunch and dinner) may happen due to people living alone, and that people have lots of opportunities to eat in places other than home which again means potentially disrupting the societal norms or forming new norms. This hypothesis reflects the eating patterns for one participant in this research however, the majority followed the more traditional structure for meals. Eating late or eating most meals outside of the home was notable by the fact that it was different.

Working with people transitioning from work to retirement could pose additional considerations to food provision. With retirement age in the UK increasing to 67 (DWP 2020) and the potential for people to continue working until they are considerably

older, food routines may be one of many aspects that people need to adjust to. In this study it was observed that busy working lives could mean that there had never really been a routine around food, retirement brought routine but also a potential sense of stagnation.

Eating routines have been explored considering Public Health guidance to uncover dietary patterns and to understand how people construct these routines (Jastran et al. 2009). Earlier it was considered whether people who are more actively engaged and interested in their foods may be more resilient to changes that could happen in later life. This could also be applied to people with flexible routines, which may help people to be more able to cope with changes that impact on food. Jastran et al. (2009) propose that eating routines reflect people's identities as they are created from a multitude of different aspects of people's lives. Routines can reflect what people value most in the food they consume and by routinely having the foods valued, this can reciprocally reinforce the value placed on them (Jastran et al. 2009; Kullberg et al. 2010; Genoe et al 2010; King et al. 2017).

Through food choice and control over what to eat, provenance and where to purchase food and preparation, and eating routines, people's identities can be reflected. All humans need food yet the way in which they interact with it can convey a myriad of different messages about who they are to the people around them (Moore and Biondo 2017). Food can be a central part in many daily routines and enactments of values and beliefs, reflecting identities outwards into the social environment as well as reinforcing these values and beliefs to the individual. Being aware of others' judgements can, in itself alter how someone will reveal their identity when in different company (Moore and Biondo 2017) or how food could be used to alter others' perceptions of an individual. Food is a powerful tool to use as a means of reflecting identities.

When considering food identity and the routines and habits associated with them it is natural to consider the work of Pierre Bourdieu (Germov and Williams 2013). Bourdieu's theory of habitus being more than just habits that people have formed but also incorporating 'personal dispositions' (Germov and Williams 2013) including food

preferences. Habitus brings together many aspects of food practice and routines conveying individual positions within society. This is a reciprocal situation, where people embody all their different 'dispositions' relating to food and act accordingly (buying, growing, cooking, and eating food in ways that reflect values and beliefs) this reinforces different symbolic values placed on people who eat certain things in certain ways. Bourdieu theorised that food was part of the system that maintained class systems within society (Germov and Williams 2013). Whilst this study does not aim to consider findings purely considering Bourdieu's theories, there are aspects of habitus and the reinforcement of identities within society and interactions that can be seen in participants' food choices, judgements of other's choices and valuing of some foods over others.

Food identities viewed from the perspectives of the individual can find people describing themselves using food based language for example someone calling themselves a 'We're all foodies in our house ' and '…a pretty savoury slash sweet person…'. The language suggesting indulgence, or a balanced approach reflecting people's identities. Food can be a joyful experience, one that enables people to indulge and to experience a sense of hedonism (Delaney and McCarthy 2014), but it can also be a chore. Plastow et al. (2015b) discussed a range of food identities emerging from their research and considered how these identities could be maintained into older age. They categorised people into "Food Lovers", "non-foodie" and "Not bothered". To a degree these categories could be applied to this study however it felt more complex than these three categories. Creating schemas or categories for people's different levels of interest in food could be beneficial when finding out how someone might want support with food but it still cannot account for the complexities that can be within each of these categories and just how fundamental food might be to someone's personal and social identities.

6.5.3 Symbolic value of food

Within this study the symbolic value of food as a gift to others was an important part of making others feel that they belonged as well as the 'gifter' gaining a sense of belonging. Whether someone gifted food or received it there was a connection made,

a way to communicate love, valuing, being valued and inclusion. Foods that had been homemade were particularly valued as they reflected the time and effort that someone had put into making something. The symbolic value of food did not just stop at the point of the food itself but also other contributions; crockery, cookware or table decorations were all ways in which food (and associated items) were symbolic of valuing others and showing this physically. Giving food to others could also be seen as a way to demonstrate knowledge of food and skills of cookery to others. In this study images were discussed where food held different symbolic values. Photographs showing meals cooked for friends were described with information about the recipe and ingredients, images of foods cooked for others and packaged ready to present as a gift, pictures of cakes for birthdays and Christmas dinner gatherings. Food was a symbolic way to celebrate events and mark occasions.

The role that food can play in showing symbolic value to others is something that returns the discussion to the topic of gender. Previous work has shown that women can see cooking for others as an opportunity to gift food items (Sidenvall et al. 2000; Wright-St Clair et al. 2005; O'Sullivan et al. 2008; Beagan and D'Sylva 2011; Delaney and McCarthy 2011). There is a suggestion that women cooking for others' pleasure as well as being able to show their culinary abilities to others outside of the home. Whilst there is certainly evidence of this in this study there was not a clear gender divide. Men within the study could also be seen to use food to value others and using food as part of creating celebratory events. This was reflected in Section 6.3.4 when talking about the gendered nature of food occupations such as caring.

Having a desire to give food to others and thus have value in someone else's life is identified, by Peoples et al. (2017) as being an important part of providing a sense of belonging and a sense of wellbeing for an individual. Part of belonging with other people, communities, societies, and cultures can include reciprocity, the need to 'give back', to feel valued and needed, in this case through food (Hammell 2014). Food can be a very natural and demonstrative means of including others, providing a sense of belonging both in terms of inviting others into social situations as well as giving food or food related work to enhance and strengthen the sense of belonging. Having the

chance to connect and engage in food occupations with others can provide experiences that make people feel valued, wanted, and can give a sense of self-esteem (Hammell 2014). Research looking at the impact of how 'useful' someone feels in older age considers the negative impact on health for older adults when they lose a sense of purpose and usefulness (Gruenewald et al. 2007). Being able to gift food or help dress the room ready for a shared meal can maintain a sense of 'usefulness' as well as the symbolic value they hold.

As seen in this study, the symbolic value of food is shown in different ways. Giving food (or associated items) to others can hold significant importance and food can be central to celebratory occasions. It would therefore be interesting to explore the impact for older people of not being able to use food in this way any longer. Supporting people to maintain this aspect of their food lives in some way could support a sense of belonging and of being a valued member of the local community and society, as well as continuing a sense of belonging in their own lives.

6.6   Covid-19

Since this research was first developed and interviews were conducted there has been a pandemic, Covid-19. Covid-19 is a novel coronavirus which was identified in late 2019 (Sansonetti 2020). The virus was easily transmissible and could cause severe illness and death and there was no specific medication, treatment, or vaccination. There was a significant risk of health services being overwhelmed by large numbers of very ill people with specialist areas such as intensive care being particularly impacted. Therefore, measures were taken in many countries to control the spread of the virus by reducing the chance of transmission. In the UK this has meant restricting population movement and limiting social contact. At the height of the pandemic (March 2020) people's access to their usual communities and networks of family and friends was significantly impacted by measures such as being forbidden to meet with anyone outside of the household, with police being given powers to disperse gatherings and issue fines (Gov.uk 2020a). All social events and non-essential shops and businesses

were closed (Institute for Government [IFG] 2021). Restrictions varied between March 2020 and February 2022 when the final Covid legal restrictions were lifted.

Older people were identified as being more vulnerable to developing serious illness from Covid-19 (Buffel et al. 2021) and were therefore advised to minimise face-to-face contact with others and people considered the most vulnerable to severe illness associated with Covid-19 infection were instructed to 'shield' which involved not leaving the home and having contact with no-one except those in their household and essential care services (NHS Digital 2021). The long-term impact of the pandemic on older people's health and wellbeing is not yet fully known though studies are now being published looking at initial findings from cohorts of older people. At the time of writing this thesis, Covid-19 restrictions have been removed. The effects of Covid-19 have ranged from asymptomatic cases to people experiencing Long Covid where they continue to experience differing symptoms for a significant time after the initial infection, including fatigue, cognitive difficulties as well as respiratory difficulties, depression and anxiety (NHS 2022). Covid-19 has not gone, and people are living with changes to their lives if not directly from having had Covid-19 but from the impact of restrictions on their lives and from the mental health impact of loneliness and isolation.

The impact for active, older, independent people (such as the participants of this study) in relation to food could be all pervasive. Going to different shops for food, eating out, going to social gatherings and interest groups (which would often involve food) was not possible at the height of the pandemic and to varying degrees throughout the two years of living with different Covid-19 restrictions (IFG 2021).

For individuals who enjoyed eating out or were mainly reliant on eating in places other than home, their usual food venues would have been closed, therefore not only isolating people from social contact but greatly reducing people's access to their usual foods. Isolation has been shown to have a significant negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing (Robb et al. 2020) impacting on cognitive abilities and, through reduction in opportunities to mobilise and maintain activities, there was

increased risk of physical 'de-conditioning' amongst the older adult population. A study by Robb et al. (2020) identified increases in anxiety and depression for older participants in their study who described feelings of loneliness, particularly at risk were individuals who lived alone, this is also identified in an article by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) released in June 2020. Considering the participants in this research, the two people who were not living with a partner, were people who talked about attending local lunch clubs, in part to offer their support but also for the opportunity it gave them for social connection. The importance of having social eating opportunities perhaps made even more prominent during the pandemic when restrictions meant that such groups could not continue to function.

Participants had been actively visiting different food shops, some finding enjoyment in taking time to peruse food options and visit different shops for different items. However, the occupation of food shopping became a very different experience during the pandemic when people were instructed to limit, as much as possible, face to face contacts and shop only for essential items (Public Health England [PHE] 2020). There were periods of time where shoppers were required to maintain two metres distance between each other and to reduce crowding in stores queuing systems and one-way systems were put in place (Gov 2020b). Additionally, some people undertook their own measures to avoid crowds by shopping at different times of day when they thought it would be quieter (Benker 2021). Supermarket trolleys were disinfected between each use (Gov 2020b) and some people washed or disinfected their food shopping once it was home (Benker 2021) even though guidance indicated there was very low risk of contamination via food (Gov 2020b). Food shopping becoming an occupation to be completed as swiftly as possible, filled with anxieties of the risk of infection (Benker 2021). Being able to browse the food shelves of a supermarket for inspiration for dinner was no longer possible, food shopping for many became very functional. This could negatively impact people's routines, food occupations and identities. However, it could also have opened opportunities to explore different local food producers (Benker 2021) or moved to ordering food for collection instead of having to go into a supermarket.

Within this research there were some participants who chose to grow some of their own food, enabling them to add to the food purchased in shops but also to ensure the freshness of their groceries and being able to know where the food came from. Egerer et al. (2022) carried out a study that spanned a range of countries (including the UK) asking adults about their use of gardening during the pandemic. Whilst the age of participants could be anyone over 18 years old, this did include older people with 10.77% of participants being over 71 years of age. Questions about growing produce were asked in this study and results showed that some of the gardeners valued being able to grow their own food either because of shortages in shops or because they wanted to be assured of the origins of what they were eating (Egerer et al. 2022). The importance of being able to engage with the natural environment through food has been discussed in Section 6.2.1 and as participants were already actively engaged in their gardens either for food production or to just enjoy the outdoors (relaxing in the garden was found to also have as many benefits by Corley et al. 2021) they could have been better placed to maintain their overall wellbeing during the pandemic. For participants in Corley et al.'s (2021) study there was lower reporting of anxiety during the pandemic that was seen to increase in some other studies, gardening and connecting with nature being a way to reduce the likelihood of worries arising and becoming more serious.

Steptoe et al. (2020) study exploring the experiences of people who were told to shield (people at high risk of serious illness from Covid-19 due to current health conditions) highlighted how increased levels of anxiety were not always because of decreased social contacts but due to increased anxieties about how people were going to get their food (amongst other important items). The ONS (2020) identified that there was an increased likelihood of people in their 60s checking on neighbours and supporting others by going food shopping for someone who was unable to. There was a decrease in this behaviour seen for people over 70, however people aged over 70 years old were identified as 'clinically vulnerable' by the UK Government (Brown et al. 2021) and would have been encouraged strongly to limit any unnecessary contacts with other people. Therefore, for the participants in their 60s in this current study, there may have been increased time spent shopping for food (and carrying out other supportive

occupations for others). Sharing and giving food has been seen to be a way of showing care and love to others therefore, shopping or cooking for an older friend or relative could have been an important way to connect with them through food during the pandemic. Brown et al. (2021) carried out phone interviews with 142 people aged between 76 – 97 years old about their experiences during the first wave of Covid-19. Whilst there were anxieties and concerns raised about the reduction in social contacts and the fear of acquiring Covid-19, there were also positives identified such as the sense of community that developed, getting to know neighbours, and having more time to do daily occupations. Whilst people in this age group may have been less likely to have been the ones offering support to neighbours (ONS 2020) they were potentially going to receive support hence bolstering the sense of community. In the Background Chapter (Chapter 2, Section 2.5 p. 22) the move towards promoting and encouraging community citizenship to address the growing need for support within an ageing society (Mortimer and Green 2015), has perhaps been achieved in some areas across the country (albeit potentially temporarily). Covid-19, lockdowns and social distancing producing a community spirit to 'pull together' thus achieving what successive UK governments have tried to encourage and generate for some time (Mortimer and Green 2015).

Another consideration of how some people may have been able to adjust to the challenges to food occupations during the pandemic were people not particularly interested in food or those who saw themselves as unfussy and prepared to eat anything. Additionally, Brown et al. (2021) propose that the resilience shown by some of the older people in their study could be as a result of the era that people were born into, living through the second world war and the following years where there were also pandemics (influenza in 1957 and 1968, Brown et al. 2021), these experiences giving them coping strategies for more times of significant challenge and change (Brown et al. 2021). The 'foodies' who enjoyed all aspects of food occupations, who may have found the restriction challenging, could equally have seen it as a challenge to continue to eat the desired foods but perhaps having to use new sources of food, using their cooking skills and knowledge to tackle the situation. There are of course many

factors that could influence people's responses to changes in food occupations due to the pandemic.

As has been illustrated through this work and previous studies, that the meaning and role of food in people's lives is very individual and complex. Understanding any specific differences in people's food occupations due to the pandemic is something that further research could illuminate.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

7.1   Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis will draw together conclusions from the current research, reflecting on the original aim of the study. Following this summary, there are recommendations for practice, and future research opportunities. Contributions to knowledge will be considered as will strengths and limitations of the research. There will also be a reflexive element considering researcher development.

7.2   Research Aim

This research aimed to gain an understanding of the role and meaning of food for independent older people using participant-driven photo-elicitation.

Ten independent older people shared their experiences of food using photographs that they had taken and that they selected for discussion. Through analysing the interviews, the role that food had in their lives and the meaning it held for them, was interpreted to form three main themes: Identity, Belonging and Environments.

For older people who were living independently in their own homes and communities, the role and meaning of food varied considerably. The conclusion therefore is that assumptions cannot and should not be made about the role and meaning that food may have in an older person's life. It is essential to understand what is important to someone about their food. This can take time and may include understanding their past, present and future priorities, and preferences.

Food has been observed to have a significant role in people's identities and this can be from the point of deciding what to eat, where to acquire food and how to prepare it, as well choosing the food itself. The need to have choice and control over food was important, both in terms of autonomy and independence but also as a way to enact values, attitudes and beliefs connected with people's identities. This includes people for whom food is central to their lives and people who are not interested in food and a

range of people in between. There were many ways in which people exerted control and choice relating to their day-to-day food, reflecting the complexity of the role that food played in people's lives, how much meaning food can hold for some people and how little meaning it can hold for others beyond the necessity to eat. Judgements can be made about other people's food choices which in turn reflects personal food values. Older people need to have agency and self-efficacy to be able to continue making many different daily food choices.

The environments in which people eat can vary, from their own homes, the homes of friends and family, cafés, restaurants, outside in the natural environment and a host of other venues. Food can be consumed in many places, but people may have specific locations that they prefer to be in when consuming certain foods or meals. Having access to eating in the places and spaces that people want to eat in is important, it can reinforce routines and structure and connect people with their surroundings. Eating outdoors can be inspired by the weather and the scenery that might be enjoyed whilst sitting, eating and contemplating. Eating alone outdoors may provide an opportunity for contemplation and reflection. Food and the environment are connected and not just to provide different settings in which to eat but also through growing food. Access to the built and natural environment is essential to enable people to continue to eat where they want and to be able to access food from different locations, both in terms of shops but also spaces for growing foods.

People living as couples may well have developed a partnership over the years where each person has settled into different tasks relating to food. It should not be assumed that this falls within a more traditional gender divide and again the importance of understanding an individual's food role, without making preconceived gender assumptions, is very important. Roles may have been firmly established over many years with a strong desire to continue in the same way for as long as possible. Again, it should not be assumed though that someone wants to continue in the same food role throughout older age, they may seek opportunities for change including relinquishing their food role to their partner or taking on more food related tasks.

Daily routines can be guided or influenced by meals and different food occasions. Food can be a comfortable and predictable part of life's daily pattern and it can also highlight how life has changed, for example the change from working to retirement. Food can also reflect health changes that may have occurred, for example the need for dentures when teeth have decayed. How these changes are managed, in terms of food, can reflect how important food is within someone's life. Someone who sees food as central to their life and identity, may feel motivated to adapt and find new ways to do things and new foods to eat. Someone who 'lives for food' may also have developed in depth food knowledge and skills, therefore being better equipped to find ways of continuing to enjoy meals despite life or health changes. Again, the importance of understanding the impact on an individual following a change in routine or health is important in that it reveals further insights into the role that food plays in someone's life and what meaning it holds for them.

Aspects of social identity can be revealed through people's engagement with food. Being restrained and not indulging in foods perceived to be unhealthy reflects different aspects of identity to someone who eats what they want regardless of any potential health consequences as their main interest is the pleasure of food. This could be viewed as food for enjoyment and central to life, or, food as fuel providing the energy needed to do other activities. The individuality of food is again essential to understand when considering the different ways that food has a role in an older person's life. To understand someone's food identity may mean going beyond someone's social food identity.

The sense of belonging relating to food can be found both in past, nostalgic recollections as well as current social and family situations. Food can be central to social occasions as well as being a conduit to social moments at events where the focus is on something else. Food can play a significant role in providing a sense connection with others and sharing food can give a sense of being valued and of valuing. Pleasure can also be gained from eating alone, whether in solitary or busy

environments. There can still be a sense of connection and belonging, whether with other people or with nature and the environment.

Past food situations can provide a strong sense of belonging in previous periods of life. For example, where people have travelled extensively or spent prolonged periods of time working and living within different cultures, the foods experienced in these different settings can create strong nostalgic memories. Foods eaten when living in a different country and in a different culture can be reflected in the present, through the wide range of food tastes and choices that people may have. Food as a link to a past place in which there was a sense of belonging. Understanding the role that food has played in people's past lives as well as the present is important for understanding the individual as well as their food choices. Foods that are redolent of past experiences might hold different meanings to food enjoyed in the present.

Food and family connections can also engender a feeling of belonging in the past as well as the present and the future. The types of foods experienced in childhood can be recollected and recreated to conjure a sense of nostalgia. Recipes, methods of cooking and use of family cookware heirlooms can all be ways in which, belonging with the family can be maintained and handed on to the next generation. Family food traditions and cultures can also be maintained through shared food moments and meals, again providing a deep sense of belonging within the family structure. Conversely food can also be a way to make someone feel as if they do not belong within the family, it can be a powerful way to indicate someone's position within the family if they are excluded from shared meals.

To be able to buy the food of choice, eat in different settings, enjoy social occasions, groups or societies, money may be necessary. Where food is an important part of people's lives, they may be willing to prioritise paying more for food items that they see as meeting their desired quality. They then use their cooking skills to minimise waste and cook food in as many ways as possible to make it last and ensure it is good value for money. People's food shopping practices involve going to lots of different places to buy the quality and range of items desired. However, it may consist of as

quick a trip as possible for someone who is not so interested in food. People's food shopping habits may also be influenced by wanting to support and contribute to the local economy, choosing to buy certain food from local independent retailers.

Being able to maintain individual food practices is essential for older people as a means of enacting values and beliefs. Throughout this research it was clear that older people may be as actively interested in food as they had ever been if this is something that had always been a strong part of their identities. Equally, for people who had never really had any interest in food, this had continued. The essential point being that people are individuals and need to be able to continue to have the choice and control over their food to as greater or lesser an extent as they want so that they can continue living a meaningful existence congruent with their values, beliefs, needs and wants. Food is a commonplace everyday experience, yet, for each person it can hold a complex, enmeshed mix of emotions, memories and connections with places and people. This needs to be recognised as an important part of life for older people.

7.3   Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the development of themes through the discussion. Uncovering the everyday food occupations of the ten older participants has led to discussions around their individual approaches but these in themselves lead to considerations of everyday ways to support older people when they are unable to continue with food occupations in the way then need and want to.

Environments: individuals and agencies supporting older people with food occupations need to ask questions to understand how and where an older person has preferred to eat the different meals of the day. This needs to be open to considering the outdoors, the natural environment as well as the environment within the home. Occupational Therapists assess aspects of the environment when working with individuals however, this may be constrained to the essential aspects of enabling access to somewhere safe that someone can sit and eat rather than thinking about the meaning that people may attribute to different locations and their food occupations. Constraints of provision

should not restrict investigations into the importance (or unimportance) of the built and natural environments for individuals and their food occupations, getting the environment 'right' may enable and motivate someone to engage with food more successfully, supporting them to maintain a sense of belonging in place.

The importance of the natural environment should also be considered when understanding someone's needs relating to food occupations. Creative ways in which to maintain connection with the natural world through food should be given consideration. Whether this be supporting people to continue or start growing their own food or ensuring people have fresh fruit and vegetables as they are a very direct way in which to provide a connection to the outdoors. Pragmatic challenges of time for preparing food from scratch may immediately be raised as a reason why this would be more difficult to achieve however this then leads to a broader discussion about the freshness of food provided to those who need support.

Accessing the built environment is also very important. People who wish to continue to shop and eat in different places, being able to choose foods from different stores and being able to eat meals in different venues may be very important to someone's identity, routines, sense of control and belonging. However, this is often reliant on people being able to drive independently and manage different terrains (e.g.: stepped access) to access the places they want to go. For people supporting individuals who are no longer able to access spaces and places in the ways they had previously, there needs to be consideration as to whether someone wants to maintain their previous ways of managing food occupations or whether they want to stop and have more things provided at home. Changes to the accessibility of built environments in villages, towns, and cities and to the transport systems is an ongoing challenge but without the importance of accessibility being constantly raised, then change will not happen. Adding to the discourse already taking place about the need for built environment to promote active ageing, highlighting the connection with food occupations could provide further weight to debate.

Gendering food occupations: challenging organisations and services to consider the language used and reviewing whether assumptions are made about gendered approaches to food provision for older people could generate a shift towards focusing on occupational competence rather than expectations of older men and women as fitting the traditional images of what they can or cannot do in the kitchen. When working with older people needing food support it is proposed that finding out about the importance of food in the individual's life and the food occupations they have participated in (and may wish to still participate in) without gendered assumptions or gendered language could provide opportunities for people to talk more openly. This may support some people to feel less guilty that they do not want to cook or open up opportunities for people to express interest in developing new skills or enhancing existing ones.

Photo-elicitation and photo-voice: Using imagery from studies such as this or developing new projects empowering older people to show their food occupations through photographs can provide an engaging and powerful way in which to reveal day to day unseen food occupations. By exploring more novel ways to engage organisations and individuals who support older people with their food occupations it may help to convey the multifaceted ways in which older people, whether on their own or with a partner, may carry out their food occupations. The opportunity to generate discussion and debate through using images could be a powerful way in which to engage people at a variety of levels of influence. Having such displays open to the public would also be important, generating new thoughts and ideas for unpaid carers supporting someone else with food occupations.

7.4   Dissemination of Findings

Research Knowledge Exchange (RKE) is a way in which knowledge and ideas gained from research studies can be shared with organisations and the public and in exchange different perspectives and experiences are shared with the researcher (London School of Economics 2021). It is a two-way process where both parties can inform further development of ideas and further research. One of the drivers behind RKE is to ensure

that research is beneficial and can have an impact beyond the research world itself. The findings from this research could form part of RKE with providers of services for older people in the community needing support, with technology innovation to consider new ways to enable continued autonomy and independence over food and could facilitate discussion with private care providers about approaches to food provision. The use of photographs in this study means that there is a wealth of imagery that, whilst not presented here in the thesis, could provide different ways to engage audiences when exchanging the research findings for thoughts, comments, ideas for further research and innovations in the area of older people and food.

7.5   Strength and limitations

A strength of this research is that it focused on an area that is little explored. A second strength of this research is that gained depth of understanding of the nuanced and multifaceted perspectives of older people's connections with food. The use of participant-driven photo-elicitation provided a valuable opportunity to add depth to participant interviews. The use of the photographs as memory prompts during the interviews enabled people to add details which may have not been recollected or thought of as important if they were involved purely in a verbal interview. The use of photographs also enabled them to share the environments in which they ate their food without relying on words alone, again adding depth to the discussion. The topic of food for older people who are independent is very 'everyday' and could be seen as something commonplace and not worthy of investigation. However, using photographs and interviews revealed that the role food played in people's lives was very individual as was the meanings that people attached to different foods.

The diversity of participants was another positive aspect of the study. As there was not a specific focus on people with a certain diagnosis or managing a specific life event, the scope was broad for engagement of participants and this resulted in more men than women and also a lesbian couple. The diversity of the participants however did not reflect a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds or different ethnic groups. Whilst

this is a limitation of the study, the range of participants were reflective of the context in which the study took place.

The time of year in which the data was collected spanned the autumn and winter months. Carrying out the study as either a longitudinal project covering all seasons or recruiting people at different times over the year may have revealed other aspects of the role and meaning of food in people's lives. However, participants did talk about food at other times of the year, particularly in relation to fruit and vegetables they grew) therefore it would appear that the time of year did not entirely limit food discussion to just the autumn and winter seasons.

It is possible that people may not choose to show everything they ate in the images if concerned that they might be judged for eating things that they thought they should not have (e.g. things that might be deemed unhealthy). It did not appear that participants had curtailed their images however it is difficult to know in reality therefore this could be draw back of this process when used with food.

Limiting the literature to articles only in English may have resulted in relevant literature being missed therefore limiting the background understanding of the topic.

Another potential limitation was not getting validation of findings from participants in the study. However this can also be viewed as a strength in that gaining feedback from participants once the findings have been developed can mean that the work feels unfamiliar. People may not validate findings post-interpretation.

7.6   Further research

There are a number of areas that could be considered for further research as new questions arose during the study. Carrying out the same photo-elicitation based research with people who are receiving support with meals could provide opportunities to explore what the role and meaning of food is when unable to be independent. Additionally, finding out how people feel about the level of control and

choice they have when needing support from others could provide further information to guide services involved in food provision.

Exploring the shared food roles for older couples in more depth would further develop the initial findings in this study. By using photo-elicitation but with both partners in a relationship this could explore the partnership and assumed roles to aid a fuller understanding of how couples work together. This could be beneficial both with continuing to consider whether gendered food roles are less binary than once discussed but also it may lead to further knowledge that would be beneficial when supporting someone with food at a time of transitioning to living alone after the loss of a partner.

Connections between the natural environment and food for older people arose as a theme in this research and appears to be a less explored topic in current literature. Conducting research focused specifically on this area could uncover new understandings about how environment and food are intertwined and how one may influence the other. This would be a research area that would potentially benefit from using participant-driven photo-elicitation to gain more depth of understanding as images mean that participants are not reliant on using words to describe scenes.

Participant-driven photo-elicitation is a less used research method with older people yet photography is commonplace and something that, as was established by participants in this study, not new and was very familiar. For a people who may feel viewed by society as less capable as they get older, being able to use a research method that very much has participants at the centre, driving the data, this can be empowering. Use of participant-driven photo-elicitation with older people holds great potential to explore many aspects of their lives. Exploring everyday occurrences through photographs and interviews provides the opportunity for greater depth and a different researcher, participant dynamic and is something that would be a positive way to carry out future work with older people. It may also attract different people to participate, as seen within this study, there were more men than women. It cannot be

proven that this was because a camera was involved however this in itself would be interesting to investigate.

7.7   Development as a researcher

The following section is written in the first person as it is a brief reflective account of the experience of carrying out this research.

This has been an opportunity to learn and develop skills as a novice researcher. Prior to starting this study, I had been unaware of the different ways in which photographs could be used as a valid form of research. Whilst I have always appreciated photography as a form of art, I had not truly appreciated the potential that it can hold as a research method. Whilst there are challenges to using it, not least the pragmatics of managing cameras and data and also potential ethical challenges, it is a form of research I would be very interested in using again and developing more experience with. I would also be interested in using images as data. There are many possibilities for using photography and using it to explore everyday lives and experiences of older people is something I would definitely like to pursue further.

I have learnt many practical things from carrying out this PhD that I would definitely take through to any future research. Having developed a better understanding of the timescales that may be involved in a project of this nature this would enable me to create more appropriate timelines that would help me to be timelier with the different research stages. I now better understand the importance of each step of a research project and how they connect together, which in turn helps to highlight how important it is to get each step as robust as possible to keep building a solid foundation for the next step. I will of course never stop learning but feel that this process has been very valuable for development of a deeper understanding of what is expected of the research process.

Were I in a position to carry this research out again, I would do some things differently, however I feel this is a valuable area of study so I would still want to do the same

project. I would have better strategies now however for managing timelines, managing writing and using support networks such as online study writing groups from the start of carrying out a piece of research. Also taking opportunities to present research during the process is greatly beneficial for gaining feedback, helping confidence and raising different views and considerations. In the future, were I to use participant-driven photo-elicitation again, I would seek opportunities for co-creation with participants involved in sharing their photographs.

I entered into this PhD very conscious of my own interest in food and photographs and was mindful that I did not want to influence participants with my own perspectives. In some ways it was not as difficult as I expected, possibly because people were in their own homes, showing me photographs they had taken of their food. It was not about me and my views it was very much about them. This enabled me to separate my own identity as a 'foodie' from the interviews. This was not always easy but having the focus on their images helped. I also needed to ensure that I was aware of separating my own views and feelings when developing the findings. This was more challenging than the interviews but taking time to reflect on the work at hand and reviewing the audio of interviews and looking at participant photographs whilst listen to the audio or reading a particular section of transcript also helped to focus on the participant's experiences.

Overall, the experience of carrying out this research has provided me with more tools to use for future research in terms of project planning and managing the different stages of the research. It has also made me more curious about exploring 'the everyday' using participant-driven photo-elicitation, the possibility of using the photographs as well as interviews as data and also seeking opportunities for co-production.

7.8   Summary

Using participant-driven photo-elicitation the current research has demonstrated the complex range of meanings that food can have for older people and how it can have

different roles in their lives. This adds to the body of work exploring this topic in highlighting how food may or may not be a central part of someone's identity, how it can provide a sense of belonging both in the past and the present and how it is part of social connections. The environment, natural, built and economic all impact on aspects of food. Autonomy and independence are things that older people may strive for in relation to food, being able to maintain their identities through maintaining their food practices. More novel aspects of the findings were considerations relating to the natural environment's connection with people's enjoyment of food or influence over what people might want to eat but also the build environment in terms of where people like to eat within the home. Considerations of the need to start challenging discourse around gendered food roles has been raised to some extent by previous research and here it was reinforced. This is another important area for further exploration.

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World Health Organisation 2021. UN Decade of Healthy Ageing [online]. Geneva: WHO: Available from: https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing [Accessed: 5th June 2022]

Wolfson, J.A., Ishikawa, Y., Hosokawa, C., Janisch, K., Massa, J. and Eisenberg, D.M., 2021. Gender differences in global estimates of cooking frequency prior to Covid-19. *Appetite* [online], 161 (2021), 1-8.

Wright, S.D. and Wadsworth, A.M., 2014. Gray and Green Revisited: A Multidisciplinary Perspective of Gardens, Gardening and the Ageing Process. *Journal of Ageing Research* [online], 2014 (2014), 1-13.

Wright-St Clair, V., 2012. Being occupied with what matters in advanced age. *Journal of Occupational Science* [online], 19 (1), 44-53.

Wright-St Clair, V., Bunrayong, W., Vittayakorn, S., Rattakorn, P. and Hocking, C., 2004. Offerings: Food traditions of older Thai women at songkran. *Journal of occupational science* [online], 11 (3), 115-124.

Wright-St Clair V.A., Hocking C., Bunrayong W., Vittayakorn S. and Rattakorn P., 2005. Older New Zealand women doing the work of Christmas: a recipe for identity formation. *The Sociological Review* [online], 53 (2), 332–350.

Wright-St Clair V.A., Kerse N. and Smythe E., 2011. Doing everyday occupations both conceals and reveals the phenomenon of being aged. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal* [online], 58 (2), 88-94.

Wright-St Clair, V. A., Pierce, D., Bunrayong, W., Rattakorn, P., Vittayakorn, S., Shordike, A. and Hocking, C., 2013. Cross-cultural understandings of festival food-related activities for older women in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Eastern Kentucky, USA and Auckland, New Zealand. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* [online], 28 (2), 103–119.

Yardely, L. 2000. Dilemmas in Qualitative Health Research. *Psychology and Health* [online], 15 (2), 215-228.

Yates, L. and Warde, A., 2017. Eating together and eating alone: meal arrangements in British households. *The British Journal of Sociology* [online], 68 (1), 1-22.

Yerxa, E.J., Clark, F., Jackson, J., Pierce, D. and Zemke, R., 1989. An Introduction to Occupational Science, A Foundation for Occupational Therapy in the 21st Century. *Occupational Therapy in Healthcare* [online], 6 (4), 1-17.

Yerxa, E.J. 2009. Infinite Distance Between the *I* and the *It*. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy* [online], 63 (4) 490-497.

Appendix A   Prisma Flow Diagram

PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

For Search of Articles Older people AND Food + 2: January 2017

Data base: mySearch
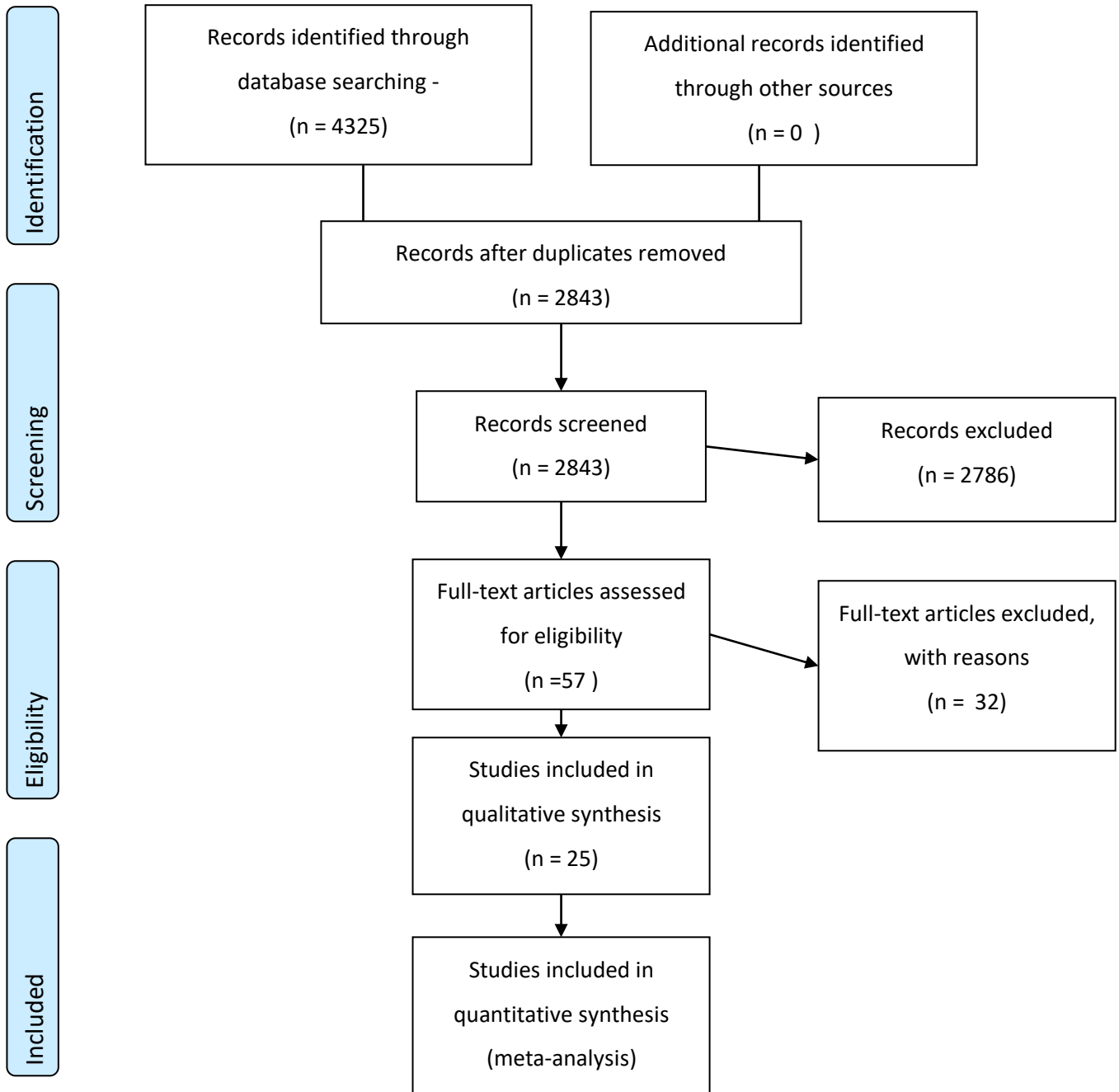
Appendix B   mySearch full list of data bases

Databases covered by mySearch
19th Century British Pamphlets,
Academic Search Ultimate,
Alexander Street,
APA PsycArticles,
APA PsycBooks,
APA PsycBooks,
APA PsycInfo,
Art & Architecture Complete,
Books 24x7,
Bournemouth University Library Catalogue,
Bournemouth University Research Online (BURO),
British Library Document Supply Centre Inside Serials & Conference Proceedings, Complementary Index,
British Library EThOS,
Business Source Ultimate,
CINAHL Complete,
ClinicalTrials.gov,
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews,
Communication Abstracts,
Communication Source,
Credo Reference: Academic Core,
Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard (DASH),
Directory of Open Access Journals,
eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost),
eBook Collection (EBSCOhost),
EBSCO eClassics Collection (EBSCOhost)
Education Source,
Emerald Insight,
ERIC,
European Union Open Data Portal,
European Views of the Americas: 1493 to 1750,
F1000Research,
Gale OneFile: News,
Government Printing Office Catalog,
GreenFILE,
HathiTrust, arXiv,
HeinOnline,

Henry Stewart Talks,
Hospitality & Tourism Complete,
IEEE Xplore Digital Library,
Industry Studies Working Papers,
J-STAGE,
JSTOR Journals,
LexisNexis Academic: Law Reviews,
Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts,
Manuscriptorium Digital Library,
MEDLINE Complete,
Milne Open Textbooks,
Networked Digital Library of Theses & Dissertations,
Newswires,
OAPEN Library,
Open Research Library,
OpenDissertations,
Oxfam Policy & Practice,
Regional Business News,
SAGE Research Methods,
SciELO,
ScienceDirect, Environment Complete,
SciTech Connect,
SocINDEX with Full Text,
SPORTDiscus with Full Text,
SSOAR – Social Science Open Access Repository,
Supplemental Index,
SwePub,
Teacher Reference Center,
Times Digital Archive,

Appendix C   Table summarising articles in literature review

Article	Research Question / Aim	Methodology and / or Methods	Participants
Atta-Konadu E., Keller H., Daly K., 2011. The food-related role shift experiences of spousal male care partners and their wives with dementia. *Journal of Ageing Studies* [online], 25 (3) 305-315	Exploring the experiences of male carers as they adjust to role changes	Grounded theory methodology 3 years of interview data analysed	Nine male care partners and their wives
Bisogni, C.A., Connors, M., Devine, C. and Sobal, J., 2002. Who We Are and How We Eat: A Qualitative Study of Identities in Food Choice. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behaviour* [online] 34 (3) 128-139	Sought to develop a theoretical framework understanding of identities relating to eating	Constructivist / Grounded theory approach Constant comparative Open ended in depth interviews	17 x middle class white adults aged 25 - 89
Delaney M. and McCarthy M., 2011 Food Choice and Health across the life course: A qualitative study examining food choice in older Irish adults. *Journal of Food Products Marketing.* [online] 17(2-3) 114-140	Aimed to gain insight into the key contextual influences on food choice behaviour patterns in older Irish adults	Qualitative methodology Semi structured interviews Thematically analysed using content analysis to inductively explore the interaction of past and current experiences	32 adults aged 61 – 79

Edfors, E. Westergren, A. 2012 Home-living elderly people's views on food and meals. *Journal of Ageing Research* Vol (2012) 1 - 9	Elderly people's views on the importance of food and drink	Descriptive qualitative study Semi-structured interviews with content analysis	12 x older people, 7 men 5 women ages 82 – 94
Genoe R., Dupuis S., Keller H. H., Schindel Martin L., Cassolato C. and Edward G. H., 2010. Honouring identity through mealtimes in families living with dementia. *Journal of Ageing Studies* [online] 24 181-193	examining the experience and meaning of mealtimes for people with dementia	Longitudinal grounded theory study	27 families
Host, A., Mcmahon, A., Walton, K. and Charlton, K. 2016b. While we can, we will': Exploring food choice and dietary behaviour amongst independent older Australians. *Nutrition & dietetics,* [online] 73(5) 463-473.	Investigate factors shaping shopping, cooking and eating behaviours amongst health, independently living Australians aged 60+	Qualitative Semi-structured focus groups / content and thematic analysis	18 x 60+ yr olds (5 male 13 women)
Hocking, C., Wright-St Clair, V. and Bunrayong, W. (2002) The meaning of cooking and recipe work for older Thai and New Zealand Women Journal of Occupational Science 9(3) 117-127	Exploratory study into the meaning of cooking and recipe work across cultures NZ and Thailand	Interpretivist methodology Focus groups	16 x NZ women (60+) 33 x Thai women (60+)

Kullberg K., Bjorklund A., Sindenvall B., Aberg A.C., 2011. 'I start my day thinking about what we're going to have for dinner' – a qualitative study on approaches to food-related activities among elderly men with somatic diseases. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* [online] 25 227-234	Aim: to address the question of how older men with somatic diseases living in their own home approach the question of food-related activities	Ethnographic methodology Thematic analysis, qualitative ethnographic interviews	18 x 64 - 84 year old men
Lane, K., Poland, F., Fleming, S., Lambert, N., MacDonald, H., Potter, J., Raats, M., Skidmore, P., Vince, C., Wellings, A., Hooper, L., 2013. Older women's reduced contact with food in the changes around food experience (CAFE) study: choices, adaptations and dynamism. *Ageing & Society* [online] 34(4) 645-669.	One year qualitative study of the impact of reduced contact with preparing and cooking meals from scratch	Purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews and focus groups and observations of cooking modified grounded theory	40 x women 65 - 95 years
Monturo C. and Strumpf N E., 2014. Food, Identity, and Memory Among Ageing Veterans at End of Life. *Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing* [online] 16 (3) 143-149	Explore the meaning, value, beliefs and emotions connected with food and how a cultural model for older adults shapes this meaning related to end-of-life treatment	Cognitive anthropology over-arching framework, qualitative descriptive study, coding	Purposive sample of 21 people, male 65 or over receiving or eligible for palliative care

Newcombe M. A., McCarthy M. B., Cronin J. M., McCarthy S. N., 2012. "Eat like a man". A social constructionist analysis of the role of food in men's lives. *Appetite*. [online] 59(2) 391-8.	To investigate the role of food in the production of identities and social experiences for men	Social constructionist approach Semi-structured interviews/ Thematic analysis	33 men aged 18 to 65 +
O'Sullivan, G., Hocking, C. & Wright-St. Clair, V. 2008. History in the Making: Older Canadian Women's Food-Related Practices. *Food and foodways* [online] 16(1) 63-87	Interpretive study into food-related practices of older Canadian women at Christmas	Interpretive methodology focus groups	20 women aged 65 – 93
Plastow, N.A., Atwal, A., and Gilhooly, M. 2015a. Food activities and identity maintenance in old age: a systematic review and meta-synthesis. *Aging and Mental Health* [online] 19(8) 667-678	Systematic review of qualitative and quantitative research to answer the questions "What is known about the relationship between food activities and the maintenance of identity in older age?		N/A
Plastow, N., Atwal, A. Gilhooly, M., 2015b. Food Activities and Identity Maintenance Among Community-Living Older Adults: A Grounded Theory Study. *American Journal of*	Exploring the role of food activities in maintaining identity among community-living older adults	Grounded theory to analyse semi-structured interviews	39 older adults in London aged 61 – 89

Occupational Therapy: [online] Vol. 69 (6) 1-10			
Shordike, A. Pierce, D., 2005 Cooking Up Christmas in Kentucky: Occupation and Tradition in the Stream of Time. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 12(3) 2005 140-148.	Exploration of older women's experiences of food relating to Christmas	Focus group interviews / collaborate comparative analysis	23 x women 65+
Sobal J. and Bisogni C., 2009 Constructing food choice decisions. *The Society of Behavioural Medicine* [online] 38 37-46.	Development of a food choice process model	Theoretical paper: constructionist social definition perspectives to inductively develop a food choice process model	N/A
Mattsson Sydner, Y., Fjellström, C., Lumbers, M., Sidenvall, B. & Raats, M. 2007, Food Habits and Foodwork: The Life Course Perspective of Senior Europeans *Food, culture, & society* [online] 10(3) 367-387.	Part of EU funded project - food in later life, choosing foods, eating meals, sustaining independence and quality of life in older age	Qualitative Interviews	644 participants aged 65 - 98 (about 80 from each country: UK, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Poland, Spain)
Sidenvall, B., Nydahl, M., & Fjellstrom, C. 2001. Managing food shopping and cooking: The experiences of older Swedish	Older women's experiences of managing food shopping and cooking as part of an independent life	Ethnography Informal interviews	18 cohabiting Swedish women aged 64 – 87

women. *Ageing and Society,* 21(2), 151-168			
Sidenvall, B., Nydahl, M. & Fjellström, C. 2000. The Meal as a Gift—The Meaning of Cooking Among Retired Women. *Journal of applied gerontology,* [online] 19(4) 405-423	Qualitative interview study to delineate the meaning of preparing, cooking and serving meals among retired single living and cohabiting women	Ethnography Informal interviews	63 Swedish women ages 63 – 87
Vesnaver E., Keller H.H., Payette H., Shatenstein B., 2012. Dietary resilience as described by older community- dwelling adults from the NuAge study "if there is a will - there is a way!". *Appetite.* [online] 58 730-738	Aimed to describe the strategies used by older adults to overcome dietary obstacles and explore key themes of dietary resilience	Thematic analysis / active interview process, 30 in depth interviews / inductive thematic analysis	30 participants (80% women) x 73 - 87 yrs old
Vesnaver E., Keller H. H., Sutherland O., Maitland S. B., Locher J. L, 2015. Food behaviour change in late-life widowhood: A two-stage process *Appetite* [online] 95 399-407	To generate a theoretical understanding of the changing food behaviours of older women during transition to widowhood	Critical realism and grounded theory methodology with the aim of developing an explanatory model of food behaviour among older widowed women	15 women aged 71 - 86

Vesnaver, E., Keller, H.H., Sutherland, O., Maitland, S.B. & Locher, J.L. 2016, Alone at the Table: Food Behavior and the Loss of Commensality in Widowhood, *The journals of gerontology.* [online] 71(6) 1059-1069	Exploration of the experiences of older widowed women in relation to food	Qualitative constructivist grounded theory - interviews	15 women aged 71 - 86
Winter Falk, L., Bisogni, C.A. & Sobal, J. 1996, Food Choice Processes of Older Adults: A Qualitative Investigation, *Journal of nutrition education,* vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 257-265.	Exploration of factors important to food choice for older people	2 semi-structured in depth interviews (per person) analysed by constant comparative method	16 people 65+
Wright-St Clair, V. A., Pierce, D., Bunrayong, W., Rattakorn, P., Vittayakorn, S., Shordike, A. and Hocking, C., 2013. Cross-cultural understandings of festival food-related activities for older women in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Eastern Kentucky, USA and Auckland, New Zealand. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, [online] 28(2) 103–119	Cross-Cultural study exploring the meaning of food for older women's food related activities	Exploratory interpretive studies across countries	33 x Thai women 60+ 16 NZ women 65+ 23 Eastern Kentucky Women 65+

Wright-St Clair, V., Bunrayong, W., Vittayakorn, S., Rattakorn, P. and Hocking, C., 2004. Offerings: Food traditions of older Thai women at songkran. Journal of occupational science [online] 11(3) 115-124	Older women's food occupations at Songkran	Exploratory interpretive study - focus groups, narrative data, exploratory approach, Krueger's model was used to sequence the semi structured interview schedules for the focus groups: parallel processes were happening in each countries in this international mutli-site study. Informed by occupational science. Trustworthiness considered and discussed.	33 women 60+ years old

Appendix D   CASP Table

CASP
Critical Appraisal
Skills Programme

27/04/2017

Atta-Konadu, Keller, Daly – Journal of aging Studies 2011

Paper for appraisal and reference: The food-related role shift experiences of spousal male partner

Section A: Are the results valid?

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: Consider
• what was the goal of the research
• why it was thought important
• its relevance

Comments:

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: Consider
• If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants
• Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal

Comments:

Is it worth continuing?

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: Consider
• if the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)

Comments:

CASP
Critical Appraisal
Skills Programme

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: Consider
• If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected
• If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study
• If there are any discussions around recruitment (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)

Comments:

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: Consider
• If the setting for the data collection was justified
• If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi structured interview etc.)
• If the researcher has justified the methods chosen
• If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews are conducted, or did they use a topic guide)
• If methods were modified during the study. If so, has the researcher explained how and why
• If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc.)
• If the researcher has discussed saturation of data

Comments:
Longitudinal over 3yrs

6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Yes ☐

Can't Tell ☑

No ☐

HINT: Consider
- If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location
- How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implications of any changes in the research design

Comments:

Harder to tell

Section B: What are the results?

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?

Yes ☑

Can't Tell ☐

No ☐

HINT: Consider
- If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained
- If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study)
- If approval has been sought from the ethics committee

Comments:

8. Was the data analysis
sufficiently rigorous?

Yes [✓]

Can't Tell [ ]

No [ ]

HINT: Consider
- If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process
- If thematic analysis is used. If so, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data
- Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process
- If sufficient data are presented to support the findings
- To what extent contradictory data are taken into account
- Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation

Comments:
Coding by one author but weekly analysis meetings

9. Is there a clear statement
of findings?

Yes [✓]

Can't Tell [ ]

No [ ]

HINT: Consider whether
- If the findings are explicit
- If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments
- If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)
- If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question

Comments:

Section C: Will the results help locally?

10. How valuable is the
research?

HINT: Consider

* If the researcher discusses the
contribution the study makes to existing
knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they
consider the findings in relation to current
practice or policy, or relevant research-
based literature
* If they identify new areas where research
is necessary
* If the researchers have discussed whether
or how the findings can be transferred to
other populations or considered other
ways the research may be used

Comments:

This is very useful research raising important questions
about roles + supporting someone c̄ dementia.

Appendix E   Systematic Review – CASP

CASP
Critical Appraisal
Skills Programme

21/01/2017

Plastow, Atwal + Gilhooly Aging + Mental hea
                                                    201

Paper for appraisal and reference: Food activities + identity maintenance in old age

Section A: Are the results of the review valid?

1. Did the review address a clearly focused question?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: An issue can be 'focused' in terms c
  • the population studie
  • the intervention give
  • the outcome considere

Comments:
Older people + maintenance of identity in 'older age in relation to food

2. Did the authors look for the right type of papers?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: 'The best sort of studies' wou
  • address the review's questic
  • have an appropriate study desig
    (usually RCTs for papers evaluatir
    intervention

Comments:

Is it worth continuing?

3. Do you think all the important, relevant studies were included?

Yes ✓
Can't Tell
No

HINT: Look f
  • which bibliographic databases we
                                              use
  • follow up from reference lis
  • personal contact with exper
  • unpublished as well as published studi
  • non-English language studi

Comments:
Very relevant and definitely worth continues

16

4. Did the review's authors do enough to assess quality of the included studies?

Yes [✓]
Can't Tell [ ]
No [ ]

HINT: The authors need to consider the rigour of the studies they have identified. Lack of rigour may affect the studies' results ("All that glisters is not gold" Merchant of Venice – Act II Scene 7)

Comments:
Articles were scored relating to Methodology etc. thorough

5. If the results of the review have been combined, was it reasonable to do so?

Yes [✓]
Can't Tell [ ]
No [ ]

HINT: Consider whether
• results were similar from study to study
• results of all the included studies are clearly displayed
• results of different studies are similar
• reasons for any variations in results are discussed

Comments:
Thematic analysis / Narrative synthesis

Section B: What are the results?

6. What are the overall results of the review?

HINT: Consider
• if you are clear about the review's 'bottom line' results
• what these are (numerically if appropriate)
• how were the results expressed (NNT, odds ratio etc.)

Comments:
First study of its kind - demonstrated clear links between food + maintenance of identity

7. How precise are the results?

HINT: Look at the confidence intervals, if given

Comments:
N/A

Section C: Will the results help locally?

8. Can the results be applied to the local population?

Yes [↗]
Can't Tell [✓]
No [ ]

HINT: Consider whether
• the patients covered by the review could be sufficiently different to your population to cause concern
• your local setting is likely to differ much from that of the review

Comments:
• benefits are applicable – so yes, but it wasn't about "patients" different population - active aging

9. Were all important outcomes considered?

Yes [✓]
Can't Tell [ ]
No [ ]

HINT: Consider whether
• there is other information you would like to have seen

Comments:

10. Are the benefits worth the harms and costs?

Yes [✓]
Can't Tell [ ]
No [ ]

HINT: Consider
• even if this is not addressed by the review, what do you think?

Comments:
Very (if any) risk of harm related to this study outcomes

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Appendix F   Theory paper review

Fawcett's Criteria for Evaluation of Nursing Theory (2005) – adapted here for a theoretical paper not specifically nursing:

Paper: Constructing food choice decisions Sobal, J. and Bisogni, C., (2009)

Jan 2017

Significance:

Uses constructionist social definition perspectives to inductively develop a food choice process model

Develops a model to understand a complex process that happens for everyone everyday in relation to food – has significance from an individual and societal level

Internal Consistency:

The philosophical claims and the conceptual model are congruent

Parsimony:

Is the theory content stated clearly: yes

Testability: Middle-range theories

There is well developed reasoning and application of the theory in the article – not sure it is so easy to review it in line strictly with Fawcett's criteria here

Are theoretical assertions congruent with empirical evidence?

Yes

Pragmatic adequacy:

This is generally feasible to implement in practice

Overall the article is very useful and will be included in the study

Bournemouth University

Dear Sophie Smith,

Ethics ID 16686

Your checklist (Understanding the role and meaning of food for older people through participant-driven photo-elicitation.) has now been reviewed and APPROVED in line with BU's Research Ethics Code of Practice.

You can now save and/or print off a hard copy of the checklist at https://ethics.bournemouth.ac.uk.

This approval relates to the ethical context of the work. Specific aspects of the implementation of the research project remain your professional responsibility.

It is your responsibility to ensure that where the scope of the research project changes, such changes are evaluated to ensure that the ethical approval you have been granted remains appropriate. You must re-submit for ethical approval if changes to the research project mean that your current ethical approval is no longer valid.

Students – if the scope of your research changes, please discuss with your Tutors/Supervisors

before submitting a new checklist.

Many thanks

For UG/PGT enquiries – please contact your Supervisor in the first instance

For general enquiries – please email *researchethics@bournemouth.ac.uk*

Ethics Approval email received: Mon 14/08/2017 14:35

Full ethics submission can be provided if required for review by the Funding Panel

Appendix H   Images with participant photos

Examples of disseminating research in different ways.

Images 1 and 2 are the front and back of an A5 sized 'Recipe Card' created for a 3 Minute Thesis presentation competition at the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Annual Conference 2019 (Won the Judges Award)

Image 3 is the front and back of a folding business card created to give out at a public engagement event for Pint of Science 2019

Image 4 is an entry in the University of Worcester Research School Photographs of Research competition which are displayed in the public library (won Judges Choice Runners up Award)

SJSMITH
& Partners
RECIPE FOR RESEARCH

CURLY PASTA WITH GAMMON AND VINE RIPENED TOMATOES

JUNE 2019

Understanding the role and meaning of food for older people using participant-driven photo-elicitation
Serves a purpose : Prepare 5 Years : Cook 2 Years

Ingredients

* 1 Researcher
* 2 PhD Supervisors
* 10 participants (aged well within a UK home to between 67 - 87 years)
* 6 digital cameras of standard quality
* A good handful of time
* 1 Digital dictaphone
* A good few spoonfuls of patience
* Several lbs of food interest
* An unlimited supply of journal articles
* An unlimited supply of food and drink for the researcher
* A full case of IPA (*not Indian Pale Ale - Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis)

Method

1 Preheat one research centre to 180 degrees. Meanwhile chop and change PhD ideas until the optimal texture is reached. When this point is achieved submit the PhD Research Proposal to the PhD oven and await the initial outcome. Once the outcome rises and shows positive signs of being done, remove from oven and start working on it
2 Put the cameras in the hands of the participants and allow time to breath. Whilst participants take photographs of anything they associate with food and drink, read many journal articles making sure to check for quality, do not keep any that are not fresh enough or any that smell a bit iffy
3 Once photographs have been harvested from the research field, return to the source and ask them to talk about their produce, be sure to record this on the digital dictaphone
4 Vigorously sift all the interview produce to make sure that only the finest themes are identified and then place them all gently into a slow cooker
5 The resulting dish will take some time to serve but be patient, it will be worth it.

Find more research recipe information visit:

@SophieJSmith3

sophie.smith@worc.ac.uk

"I had my year in Italy so I did acquire a taste for wine and I like red wine mostly...It's always the thing they ask you at the doctors, do you smoke and do you drink? So you feel, well, that's incriminating in itself. So, no, one doesn't like to admit...but I don't drink that much...I don't drink if I'm driving, you know...so it's...more difficult to drink out because then you've got to get yourself home. So...I'm more likely to drink at home...so it is the wrong way to do it really."

Ruth

"... this is from Kenya. Sunday lunch in Kenya...was always a curry I would go watch the cook ... cooking the curry and he taught me about frying the spices... and the onions in the pan and putting the meat inside."

Derek

" ... we had python steaks for dinner..."

Meals on Reels: Exploring what older people reveal about their food histories through photographs of their current experiences."

Worcester Pint of Science 2019

With thanks to all participants for their generosity in sharing their stories and photographs.

" breakfast is cereal ...I usually have some grapes or something like that ...It is a mix of Bran Flakes... Cornflakes and usually ... shredded Wheat. Bitesize ones. When I was working on the farm... I was up at 5, I didn't used to have anything then, I'd go out and start and come in about 8 or 9 am for a breakfast and that was my favourite meal of the day...we'd have mostly cooked breakfast."

David

"...my mum used to make homemade lemonade and ginger beer. Though we always had a tooth brush and toothpaste...we did eat a lot of sugar. So about two or three years ago I had a couple of wobbly molars that were...falling down because they had nothing else to support them... I'll have Salmon or fish, something easy to chew. I would never have a steak... It's changed the way I eat when I go out."

Alice

Sophie Smith
PhD Student Bournemouth University
Email: i7939308@bournemouth.ac.uk
Twitter: @sophiejsmith3
Ethics approval 16686 Bournemouth University:
Supervisors:
Professor Jane Murphy and Dr Jaqui Hewitt-Taylor
Participant names are pseudonyms
With thanks to University of Worcester for their support in my journey as a Senior Lecturer in Occupational Therapy and as a PhD Student

The most important meal of the day

Sophie Smith

These images of breakfasts were taken by participants in PhD research considering the role and meaning of food for older people. Participants aged 67 to 87 took photographs of their food, drink and associated items. Pictures showed busy kitchens, meals with friends, heirloom cooking utensils still very much in use and even some dentures! The range of images and interviews reveal the complex role that food can have in our lives, how it can remind us of our past and connect us with people and places. The research was inspired when working with older people as a community occupational therapist.

Bournemouth University

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title
Understanding the role and meaning of food for older people through participant-driven photo-elicitation.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why this research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not to take part.

Who is the Researcher
I am a registered occupational therapist (OT) and currently work as a lecturer at Bournemouth University (BU). Prior to lecturing I worked in health and social care with adults and children. As part of my current work I am being supported by BU to undertake a PhD. This involves carrying out research in an area approved by my supervisors who are Professor Jane Murphy (Professor of Nutrition, Bournemouth University) and Dr Jaqui Hewitt-Taylor (Senior Lecturer, Bournemouth University).

Who has reviewed this study?
The research study has been reviewed and approved in line with Bournemouth University Research Ethics Code of Practice (Number 16686).

What is the purpose of this study?
As we grow older we are more likely to have problems with getting food and drink to keep healthy. This can be for lots of different reasons, from finding it hard to get to the shops to knives, forks being difficult to hold. They are things that might mean someone is not getting the food and drink they need to keep them well. It can also mean they may miss out on social events that involve food, such as having a cup of tea with friends. For some people seeing family and friends can also be an important part of keeping well and food and drink can often at the heart of a getting together with other people.

This study is about people living in their own homes (not in residential or nursing homes), who may or may not need help with getting food or eating and drinking. I want to ask people to take photographs of their food and drink and anything that they associate with it. This might be, for example, a favourite café, preferred food shop or perhaps the kitchen. I will then use these photographs to interview the person who took the photographs. I want to know more about the role food and drink plays in older people's lives and also what

meaning it may hold for them. This study will not be judging whether someone is eating healthily or not.

Why have you been invited to take part?
You have been invited as you have expressed an interest in taking part either directly to me or through someone who has told you about the study.

Do you have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a participant agreement form. You can withdraw at any time, up to the point of the interview being anonymised. You do not have to give a reason.
.
What will happen to you if you take part?
If you would like to take part I will arrange a time to visit you at a time to suit you. I will talk through what you need to do and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a Participant Agreement Form.

The study will then include the following:

- Recording some basic information about you
- Ensuring you understand what you can photograph and that you are comfortable with how to use the camera.
- You will be asked to take photographs of your food and drink and anything else you might associate with your food and drink (e.g. a particular shop or café).
- You can take as many or as few photographs as you like during the time you have the camera.
- The camera will be collected and the photographs put onto a computer.
- I will then return to you at a convenient time to show you the photographs and interview you about them.
- The length of the interview is hard to predict as it depends how many photographs you want to discuss but it will probably be between an hour to an hour and a half

Once an interview has been completed and signed photographic consent gained I will spend time working through the interviews so that I can write my PhD thesis. I may share my work in different ways. This could be through articles written in journals or events such as exhibitions or conferences. This will take considerable time and the PhD is not expected to be finished until 2020.

Expenses and payments?
There are no payments associated with this study and the camera provided for the duration of the study will be on loan.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
It is unlikely that there will be any risks in taking part in this study. However, when carrying out interviews about roles and meanings of things in your life it is possible that this may raise different emotions. If you feel upset during the interview we can stop at any time.

If during the interview you disclose something that gives me concern for your wellbeing, I would discuss my concerns with you and if necessary I would support you to contact an agency that could help. In the unlikely event that you did not give consent for contact to be made with a supporting agency but I was still significantly worried about your welfare I may still need to let the appropriate people know so that you can get the help you need. I would always try to talk to you about this first as it would be much better if this was done with your full agreement. I do however have a duty of care as a researcher and would not want to leave anyone in a harmful situation.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
The information gained from the study will add to the understanding of the role and meaning of food for older people living in the community but will not benefit you personally.

How will my information be kept?
All interviews will be recorded on a digital Dictaphone for the purpose of transcription and these interviews will be downloaded and recorded securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

All photographs, interviews, transcripts and data will be held securely for 5 years after the study has been completed and will then be destroyed securely.

Anonymity will be maintained as much as possible however due to the use of photography there is a chance that someone may recognise a location or setting that appears in your photographs and this could lead to you being identified. As much as possible anonymity will be maintained through ensuring any faces in images are obscured.

I will not use real names when discussing research findings. I will give pseudonyms which will mean different names will be used in any work so that at any time your interview or photographs are being referred to different names will be used.
Except where it has been anonymised, we will restrict access to your personal data to those individuals who have a legitimate reason to access it for the purpose for which it is held by us as well as by a transcriber who would also have access to your personal data.

The information collected about you may be used in an anonymous form to support other research projects in the future and access to it in this form will not be restricted. It will not be possible for you to be identified from this data.

What if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study you should contact me and I will answer any questions promptly and address your concerns:

Sophie Smith
Phone: 01202 961389
Email: sophies@bournemouth.ac.uk
Postal Address:

R601 Royal London House
Bournemouth University
Christchurch Road
Bournemouth BH1 3LT

My supervisors contact details are:

Professor Jane Murphy
Phone: 01202 962805
Email: jmurphy@bournemouth.ac.uk

Dr Jaqui Hewitt-Taylor
Phone: 01202 962174
Email: jhtaylor@bournemouth.ac.uk

If you have any continued concerns regarding this study, please contact Professor Vanora Hundley, Deputy Dean of Research and Professional Practice, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences by email to researchgovernance@bournemouth.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information sheet.

Sophie Smith

Appendix J   Photo release form

Release Form

I understand that Sophie Smith, PhD Student at Bournemouth University (BU) will be doing one or more of the following:

- Interviewing me and recording the interview which will be anonymised and a pseudonym given.
- Asking me to take photographs which may feature me, I understand that any images used will have faces obscured through pixilation.
- Asking me to take photographs which may feature my friends, family or other people I am with.

  In this instance I will ensure I have sought verbal consent to take the photograph and understand that any images used will have faces obscured through pixelation.

In the following statements 'The Contribution' refers to both the anonymised transcripts of interviews as well as the photographs generated by the participant. Photographs featuring people will not be used without faces being obscured first.

I grant Sophie Smith permission to use, publish, republish or otherwise transmit the Contribution in any medium for all purposes throughout the world. I understand that the Contribution may be altered or modified in any manner and I hereby waive any right that I may have to inspect and approve a finished product or the copy that may be used in connection with the Contribution.

I do not object to Sophie Smith:

- Storing copies of the Contribution for the above purposes or to the storing of my contact details on a database in order to contact me.

I will make no claim for any reason to Sophie Smith in relation to the Contribution or the data contained in this release, except as permitted by law.

If you should wish to withdraw your permission at any time before data has been anonymised, please contact Sophie Smith on 01202 961389, e-mail sophies@bournemouth.ac.uk

Your Information	
Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Signature	
Date	

For Internal Use Only

Contribution Information	
Type of contribution:	
Description:	
Location:	
Date:	
File Number(s):	
Name of University staff:	
Notes	

Appendix K   Consent form

BU
Bournemouth
University

Participant Identification Number for this study:

Participant Agreement Form

Title of Study: Understanding the role and meaning of food for older people through participant-driven photo-elicitation.

Name of Researcher: Sophie Smith

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated.............................for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up to the point of the interview being anonymised.

3. I understand that when I take photographs that contain other people I must ask their permission and provide them with the researcher's contact details if they would like to ask for more information.

4. I understand that separate consent will be requested for use of photographs generated from this study.

5. I understand that if, during the study, the researcher were to become concerned for my wellbeing, they would support me to contact an agency that could help.

6. I understand that all data will be held securely for the period of the study and for 5 years afterwards in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Person   Date   Signature
taking consent

Appendix L   Participant Details Form

Participant Number:……………………………………………………………………..

Date of Interview:……………………………………………………………………….

Participant Details

Age:………………………………………………………………………………….

Gender: (Please circle)

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Home situation: (Please circle)

Lives alone

Lives with partner / husband / wife

Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself: (Please circle)

1. Totally independent with all things food and drink related

2. As needing some assistance with food and drink related tasks (could be shopping, family providing meals, meals on wheels etc)

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sophie Smith

Occupational Therapy Lecturer

Faculty of Health & Social Sciences

Bournemouth University

Research Participants Wanted!

Study Title:
Understanding the role and meaning of food for older people through participant-driven photo-elicitation.

- Are you 80 years old or older?

- Do you live in the community in your own home?

- Are you independent with all things related to food?

- Do you have help with food related tasks eg: shopping, cooking, meal delivery?

- Would you feel able to take photographs of your food and then be interviewed about them?

My name is Sophie Smith and I am a PhD student and Occupational Therapy Lecturer at Bournemouth University.

If you or someone you know would like to find out more about taking part please contact me on the number or email address below.

Sophie Smith
Email: sophies@bournemouth.ac.uk

Work phone: 01202 961389

Ethics Approval Granted by Bournemouth University

Ref: 16686

Thank you for reading!

Appendix N   Pearson Award Confirmation Letter

Patron
Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal
President
Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins
Chief Executive
Julia Scott

Royal College of Occupational Therapists

<u>Via email only</u>
Sophie Smith
43 Shillito Road
Poole
Dorset
BH12 2BW

19 January 2018

Dear Sophie

RCOT Awards for Education, Research and Continuing Professional Development

Thank you for submitting an application to the 2018 round of funding opportunities from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists' annual awards scheme.

I am delighted to inform you that your application for a **Pearson Award** has been successful. The award is to the value of **£725** towards transcription costs related to your PhD research activity *'Understanding the role and meaning of food for older people through participant-driven photo-elicitation'*, and the purchase of a copy of *'Food for the ageing population'*.

The outcome of the 2018 annual awards funding round will be published in a forthcoming edition of OTnews and details of the award winners and their funded activity will also be posted on the RCOT website. You may also like to note that this year's award winners will be invited to attend a celebratory event in London in the latter half of September. Further details about this event will be provided as they become available.

The conditions of the award are as follows:

Following the completion of the funded activity you will be required to provide:
- a financial statement confirming how the award money was spent
- a one page evaluation of the SMART targets
- a summary report (500 words) for publication on the RCOT website.

Further guidance on the audit requirements is set out in the separate attachment to this letter.

I would be grateful if you could sign and return a copy of this letter to show that you agree to the conditions of the award as set out above. The signed letter should be returned to Lesley Gleaves, R&D Administrator, at the above address. Lesley will then liaise with you regarding the payment of the award funding.

Appendix O   Diary entries from interview time as well as later time when first analysing transcripts

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date 30 / 10 / 17 /

x intentionally taking photo of things you want to talk about / show

vs

• taking pictures of meals + seeing what comes from it

Interview time c P1 held in RLH - pictures printed + also up on big screen. P1 did not want to carry out the interview at home for personal reasons but also use to work in the buildings around the campus so was keen to demonstrate / talk about this.

Went through process of release form and checking I had the correct basic info (age, marital status etc) and then I gave P1 all her photos (41) and asked her to look through them and select any in particular she wanted to talk about. She chose to talk about each one in turn and barely needed any prompting!

I had the 'set questions' as designated by Wang + Burris but didn't really allude to them in the end as P1 just talked and gave stories. Whilst the photos were a prompt, there was also the aspect where she had taken an image because she wanted to talk about something that was important to her. She was pretty passionate about food for older people and referred back to her elderly aunt who still wanted M+S and Waitrose food.

The sorts of things that she took photos of that were not 'just food' were the photos of

---

• Collect camera from Participant 4   date 20 / 11 / 17 /

• Spent a bit of time chatting - she was worried that she had forgotten to take some shots - but gave reassurance and said she wasn't alone! She also said that she felt her food all looked a bit 'brown' and not very interesting. She said it was when she was out for food that she forgot to take a photo - she took the camera with her but then forgot to photograph the food until it was too late!

Will download the photos and then arrange a time to go back and interview.

Own reflection

Struggle ō slow going through audio —
soooooo used to having music / noise
around when I am trying to concentrate

Themes for (Ruth) Pseudonym date 15 /11 /19 /

Working life

- Home cooked food
- Links ō childhood / past links ō present - food
- Contributing   as a conduit - the glue
- Being served   Routine
- The space she is in   Health / Healthy eating
- Outside spaces   ⟶ Environmental connections
- Aging   ↳ Animals / wildlife
- Living alone   Dining less   Not cooking
- Seasonal changes   Texture of food
- Communication   Pleasure from food ⟶
- Social connections   Eating
- Money / finance   Food Textures / qualities
- External gov't influence - unfunded lunch club /
        other grps shut in summer Food Scene (eg: setting tables)
- Global connections - charity   Food likes
              - own life   Food dislikes
- Food / drink guilt   Food choice
- Education -   Food occurrences
- Generational things   (lunch etc)
- Belonging / being part of something bigger
- Things changing eg: no longer cooking @ home
- Mood

Appendix P   Example of IPA analysis directly on transcripts, format of table follows Smith et al. (2012) suggested layout.

Transcript	Exploratory comments
to work on the [Local Paper]. She's a wonderful photographer and she loves coming to these lunches. I think she thinks we're a load of old codgers but she enjoys coming. And she was talking about [the local town] in World War II which is why I put...I did the table. So there's poppies on the table...and poppy serviettes to tie in with World War II. So...no, this is a very...a comfortable sort of time. I enjoy it. And it's...you know what's on offer. It's a bowl of soup and you can have seconds, which we often do, and...yes. And fruit juice. I usually have apple but you can have apple, orange and water. And then afterwards, you have...a crumble or a fruit tart...with custard. And it's so home-made and it's...it possibly refers back to one's childhood because that's the kind of thing one's mother made.	Status [skills] of the speaker described and her perceived love of attending. Something more than 'just' a lunch club - does having an [educative] element change the student [needs]?
	Ruth's perception of the group members language wheel to denote/portray a certain image - younger speaker with older people not so capable. My interpretation of 'old codger'
	Ruth has taken care and attention in decorating the tea table - not just to make it nice for people [acting] but to tie in c the speaker's topic. Table cloth (in image), serviettes. Assurance between poppies + WWII. Thus men taken planning + thought. More than just 'turning up' - contributing (being in part of) Establishing why she goes - comfort, enjoyment, you know what to expect
	Predictability, routine. "Having seconds" - a cultural phrase. Don't know if there was acclaim to please & the peppers no indication of such.
	Choice of drink + food. Sweet / pudding after soup → routine, cultural, predictable. Sense of pride in tone that there are a range of things on offer
	Home-made - again referred to
It sounds like there's a lot of sort of comfort	Ruth thinking about the significance for her though are of 'one' describes her a little from them, is she saying thus is how it feels for her or for others. The food but also the environment → round a table, main item possibly et where environment maybe reminiscent of childhood? sitting or laying the table - often a whole job?

36

Thomas demonstrates his understanding of healthy food and nutrition required to exercise

Thomas has routine, it isn't massively strict just a range of foods that they tend to have each week, they don't plan too far ahead unless they need to book in somewhere.

Thomas doesn't mention eating & cooking but his wife but there is occasional brief reference such as here.

Thomas' buying of fish from the boats, freshly caught, shows a connection to the local environment. There is a freshness about this that feels different to a discussion about a supermarket shop. Molly is "spicing that up". It feels very 'present', being in the here + now

---

Yeah. Well, you shouldn't really go with nothing. Banana's a convenient thing and it's a source of energy and it's really sensible fruit to eat. By and large, week after week, the food would be similar. I'm not saying it's going to be the same.....but it's meant to be similar. For example, today we're having, I'm having dal rice, spinach, and potato bargy. So, that's, like, a useful Indian. This is different. My wife's actually made it. Somewhere we're going to fish and chips. So, it, it follows pretty regular patterns.

And you, couple you plan your meals ahead for the week or is it...because it tends to follow the same sort of pattern. It just kind of rolls on...

About two days. Not much further than that apart from the fish and chips because it's only got a couple of tables, so we book that up earlier. Apart from the fish and chips, we don't tend to...we're meeting a friend there, so we have to co-ordinate it like that. Otherwise, there's no too much planning. We found a guy, his name is S, that...well, there's two. One's called D, which is by the chine with the H restaurant is near the beach and this one is where the junction on the beach between B and P. It's called S. Both of them have got boats and they go out fishing and then they sell the fish.

I know exactly where you mean. Yeah.

We got some fish. Molly got some mullet there today and she's spicing that up and

---

Exercise /sport
Health
Routine
Food from different countries
colloquial phrases to do c food

Eating c others
Eating out

Food quality
Food origins
Environment

Gender roles
Spices

Colloquial phrase

Preparing food.

Many Iknana
Food occasions

Things changing

Eating alone

Health

Social connections

Food as a gift

So that's an occasional now because it's rather

expensive, but it's very nice. It's a very good size

portion. As I'm anticipating everything will have

got smaller. Yes, so that was lunch. And that's the

folks in the café, yes. And sometimes you find one

way and I take...I take my paper in with me and I

read my Independent. My 'I'. And I might even do

the cryptic or something if I don't meet anyone or

chat to anyone.

Take a form of entertainment with you.

Yes. Or I just sit and think. And then this must be

Wednesday night, next one. And again, I was in

considerable pain....So I took this Pyroxicam with

me to the Garden Club because this is the Garden

Club and I took one of my milkshakes and a biscuit

from home. I think it was one of the biscuits B

gave me, probably, because she kept pressing

Ruth really enjoys this but the cost means she has to limit the treat.

There is a sense of disappointment about the changing size of things but also resignation.

Ruth goes prepared. Naming the paper - ? highlighting. Social positioning / political allegiances?

Ruth knows that seeing people she knows is not uncommon but is none the less incidental - she goes prepared. & entertainment.

Eating alone as thinking/processing time in today's "hustle" and bustle" do many people give themselves time to just "sit + think", whilst feeling early?

Pain does not stop play! Ruth's attendance at yet another group has not been thwarted by being in pain, she goes armed c pain killers + a drink + biscuit.

Emphasis that Ruth did not ask for the biscuit

Appendix Q   Example of Themes from individual transcript

Put into an excel document (middle column) and being grouped together to form bigger themes (left column), the right column are thoughts and notes

Participant 5 - Frances	Participant 5 - Frances	Discussion / analysis thoughts
Breaking the rules	Breaking the rules of how to cook something 5	* Cultural Capital * Economic Capital * Social Capital * Bordieu ……. * Older people….better resilience to change with increased Capital OR does having increased Social and Cultural Capital potentially make change to food intake harder to swallow? Is it possible that more people over 77 (last possible lot to have been conscripted) and those who were growing up in a more colonial era could have developed more cultural capital because learning about new foods was a novel thing? Now we have access to world foods in our local supermarket so does it seem less 'exciting to try' …..we can holiday in countries and not touch 'local' food…..
	Breaking the cultural rules of the Dinner Club 5	
	Breaking Health Guidance rules in favour of taste 5	
	Breaking the rules for pleasure over health 5	
	Not breaking the rules, trying to sticking to health guidance 5	
Challenging Authority	Challenging the authority of the teacher 5	
Choices / Autonomy	Making food choices and asserting autonomy as a child 5	
	Choosing what and how to cook 5	
	Being 'told' but also having the autonomy to 'refuse' things in relation to food 5	
	Choosing where to get food from 5	
	Choosing what to eat 5	
	choosing where to eat 5	
	impact of one person's food choices on someone else's 5	
	Judging someone else's food choice 5	
	choosing pleasure over health 5	
	Choice influenced by external factors 5	
	Choosing how to present and serve food 5	
	Enabling others to have food choice 5	
	Healthy choices 5	
	Choosing quality food 5	
	Choosing when to eat 5	
	Choosing not to eat 5	
Connecting with Culture	Contemporary Culture of published recipes and known chefs 5	
	Global cultural connections through food 5	
	Novel food experiences 5	
	Developing cultural capital 5	
	Sharing cultural food knowledge 5	
	Family culture 5	
	Non-traditional Culture 5	
	British Culture 5	

Control	Control over what and how to cook 5	What can we learn from the cultural capital of the older population
	Control over other people through food 5	
	control over what to believe in relation to food 5	
	Control over what to eat 5	Are the older population seen as less likely to have food related cultural capital
	Control of where to eat 5	
	Loss of control 5	
	Control over the appearance of food 5	
	Giving control to others 5	
	Self control 5	Novelty of 'foreign' foods meant more was tried? Exciting / novel ....in Francis' case her identity as someone who was not 'the usual' Brit (and also being gay was not usual) was a source of pride, being invited in to other cultures through food was a source of enjoyment and eschewing her cultural heritage .....
	control over weight through food 5	
	Control of when to eat 5	
Environment	Where to eat 5	
	Connecting with the outdoors through food 5	
	Environment influencing food enjoyment 5	
	Environment influencing food choices 5	
	Eating environment generating memorable moments 5	
	Environmental food awareness 5	
Food as a connection with people	Food as a shared experience 5	
	Valuing others through food 5	
	Sharing other's food choices 5	
	Learning about food from others 5	
	Food as a reason to be with others 5	Values and attitudes evident through approach to food and veiws of other's approaches to food
	Food as a means of showing skills to others 5	
	Food as a way to communicate 5	
Food for enjoyment (living to eat)	Finishing all the food showing enjoyment 5	
	Enjoyment of trying new foods 5	
	Influence of childhood in food enjoyment 5	Values = cultural origins of food Values = quality produce
	Enjoyment of sharing food 5	
	Enjoyment more important than health 5	
	Enjoyment from quality of food 5	
	Enjoyment of individual preferences being met 5	
	Living to eat 5	Attitudes = does not like people being fussy
	Food creating pleasurable memorable moments 5	
	Disappointment when food does not meet expectation 5	
Food for Function	Food as fuel 5	
	Judging the quality of the food 5	
	Food for speed 5	
	Judging others for consuming food as fuel 5	
Gender	Traditional male / female roles in relation to food 5	

Guilt	Judging own food choices as not following health-related food recommendations 5
	Justifying choices that may have health implications 5
	Eating food from origins that do not match own ethical stance 5
Identity	Eats everything on the plate 5
	Identifying by stating what they are not 5
	Identifies people by what sort of 'food' person they are 5
	has schemas for what sorts of people are different sorts of food people(eg: what sort of person a vegetarian is likely to be) 5
	Frugal 5
	Creative 5
	Pride in being a good cook 5
	Relationship with food formed in childhood 5
	Interested in food 5
	disapproval at people who are deemed 'fussy' or 'picky' without reason 5
	Adventurous 5
	Embraces new food experiences 5
	Pride in being seen as someone who tries everything 5
	Caring for others through food 5
	Provider 5
	Being cooked for 5
	Not being the cook 5
	Consumer of quality food / Values quality 5
	Disapproval of people eating poor quality food 5
	Asserts own preferences over food eaten 5
	Pleasure over healthiness 5
	Pragmatic 5
	Presentation is important 5
	wanting others to enjoy good food 5
	Food is central to life 5
	Ethical food consumer 5
Memories	Introduction to different food cultures as a child 5
	Food Values developed in childhood 5
	eating together 5
	learning to be interested in food 5
	Developing cultural capital 5
	Memories of belonging 5

	Memories of food tastes developing 5	
	Food memories linked with people and places 5	
	Memories of learning to cook 5	
Money, finance, cost	Can afford preferred foods 5	
	Frugal 5	
	Does not waste food 5	
	Pays for quality 5	
	Values the quality of food 5	
	Childhood experience influences food buying preferences 5	
	More money does not always mean better quality 5	
	Likes shopping for food 5	
	Shops in different places 5	
	Makes food last – value for money 5	
Parents and family	Parental influence on cooking 5	
	cultural food education from parents 5	
	parental influence on sharing food experiences 5	
	parental influence on interest in food 5	
	parental influence on valuing food 5	
	parental influence on trying everything 5	
	managing food preferences in relationships 5	
	parental influence on taste 5	
Roles	Role as cook 5	
	Role as shopper 5	
	Role as provider 5	
	Role as partner 5	
Routines	Where to eat 5	
	Who does the shopping 5	
	Who does the cooking 5	
	Ways of eating 5	
	Presentation of food 5	
	Food structure of the day 5	
	Changes to routine 5	
	Response to different environments 5	
	From childhood 5	
Rules	Recipe Rules 5	
	Personal rules about food 5	
	Family cultural rules 5	
	Health rules 5	
	Legal rules relating to food 5	
	Cultural rules 5	
	following someone else's food rules 5	

Social Expectation	Where to eat 5	
	Cooking to meet people's expectations 5	
	Health expectations 5	
	Altering food actions in relation to social expectation 5	
Symbolic value of food	Showing love for others 5	
	Caring through food 5	
	Shared experience 5	
	Belonging 5	
	Valuing others 5	
	Communication 5	
	Life 5	

Appendix R   Example of Themed text from different participants being put into combined themed word documents

Environment

Appendix S   Overall themes

Identity

      Choice

      Control

      Food for enjoyment

      Functional food

      Roles

      Guilt

      Routines

      Symbolic value of food

Belonging

      Cultural connections

      Social connections

      Family

Environment

      Natural / Built Environment

      Economic